Solitaria. With an abridged account of the author's life, by E. Gollerbach; other biographical material, and matter from The Apocalypse of our times. Translated by S.S. Koteliansky

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"If any ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize at one effort the universal world of human thought, human opinion, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own—the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unencumbered before him. All that he has to do is to write and publish a very little book. Its title should be simple—a few plain words—'My Heart Laid Bare.' But this little book must be true to its title."

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

A NOTE ON V. V. ROZANOV

V. V. ROZANOV (b. 1856, d. 1919) occupies a unique place in Russian literature, mainly owing to *Solitaria*, published in 1912 and suppressed by the censor on account of its too outspoken tone on matters of Christianity and sex; *Fallen Leaves*, Bundle I, published in 1913, and *Fallen Leaves*, Bundle II, published in 1916.

On taking his degree in 1881, at the Moscow University, in the Faculty of History and Philology, Rozanov became a teacher in secondary schools in the provinces. A year before he took his degree he married Mlle. Souslov, the mistress of F. Dostoevsky[1]—a union which turned out unhappily, and in 1886 husband and wife parted. Bored by his career as teacher, Rozanov entered the civil service in 1893 and went to live in Petersburg. In 1889 he had formed a new union, this time happily, as can be seen from his frequent references in *Solitaria* and *Fallen Leaves* to his "Friend." In 1899 he joined the staff of the reactionary daily the *Novoye Vremya*, and from that time until the suppression of the paper by the Bolsheviks in 1918, he was engaged in journalism. But apart from his journalistic activity Rozanov also published several books on philosophy and religion, as for instance, *On Understanding*, 1886; *The Legend of the Great Inquisitor* (a work on Dostoevsky, whom he very much admired), 1889; *The Place of Christianity in History*, 1890; *The Family Problem in Russia*, 1903; *The Russian Church*, 1909, etc.

On the *Novoye Vremya* Rozanov occupied a foremost position, for with considerable talent, though with utter

[1] Detailed account is to be found in the volume *Dostoevsky Portrayed by his Wife* recently published by Routledge in London and by Dutton in New York.

cynicism, he dared to defend ideas and policies, which no reactionary journalist would have dreamt of supporting in the Press. Whether it was necessary for his paper to show that the Church acted nobly in excommunicating Leo Tolstoy; or to prove that Jews killed young Christian boys in order to use their blood for ritual purposes—Rozanov performed the task unblushingly, boldly, and most cynically. (But see his own explanation of this in *Solitaria.*) And while writing his journalistic articles in that vein in the *Novoye Vremya*, he wrote in a diametrically opposite vein, under a different pseudonym, and in other journals, articles directed against the Church and against dogmatic conceptions of Christianity. Why he behaved so, and generally what sort of man Rozanov was, may be gathered from his last three books, which though entirely personal and intimate, yet in their essence and form represent something quite new and original in Russian literature.

One point should be made clear. A great many of the aphoristic utterances, forming Rozanov's last three books, were jotted down by him whenever and wherever the idea might occur: in a railway car, in a cab, or even in the W.C.; on the soles of his slippers while bathing. His thoughts on prostitution he actually wrote down while following Souverin's coffin. Very many fragments bearing the mark "at numismatics" were recorded by him while examining or playing with his collection of rare coins.

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V. V. ROZANOV

A CRITICO-BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

By E. Gollerbach [1]

VASILI VASILIEVICH ROZANOV was born on 20th April 1856 in the town of Vetluga, in the Kostroma province. The Rozanov family moved to Kostroma when Vasili was three years old, and there he spent his early childhood. His father died when Vasili was about five. The mother, who had to work hard, had no time to take proper care of the children, and young Vasili grew up in an atmosphere of poverty and discontent. The pension of 300 roubles, which his mother used to receive, was not enough to keep a large family. And the family had no good influence on young Vasili. He grew up a lonely boy, and found no support in anyone; soon there developed in him a sense of weakness, helplessness, estrangement. Love and tenderness were neither near him nor in him.

In *Solitaria* Rozanov says: "When my mother died, I merely realized that I could now smoke a cigarette openly. And I lighted a cigarette." And

[1] A translation of E. Gollerbach's *The Life and Works of V. V. Rozanov*, 1922, Petersburg, very considerably abridged.

further: " throughout our house I can't remember any one ever smiling."

The hard work in the kitchen garden in which young Rozanov had to take part was to him intolerable, for he was forced to labour, without any word of encouragement or affection. His elder brothers did not like him and did not help him in his work.

In one of his letters to me (of 26th August 1918) Rozanov describes his childhood as follows:

" The very last stage of poverty arrived when we lost our cow. Up till then we drank milk and were contented. The garden was a large one, and the work in it for a boy of seven was very arduous. . . . Altogether life physically was terribly difficult, ' hard-working,' and this at a time when I was beginning to go to school."

" I worked along with Voskressensky, who took an interest in our house, and was a sort of step-father; and he compelled me to work. He was a nihilist, a ' seminarist,' a ' populist,' and a ' Bazarovist ' (see Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*). My mother, innocent and fine, got to love him with an old, impotent, unhappy love. He had completed his studies at the Seminary, he was a painter, not at all a bad one, and also studied at the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg. Perhaps he was not at all a bad man, but his badness consisted in this that we all hated him too much. He used to flog me for smoking, but could not stop me.

" And then our cow died. She resembled my mother, and also came as it were ' of the Shishkin

family.' Not a strong cow, yet she gave us milk. Then something happened to her. The butcher was called in. I was looking on from the hayrick. He tied the cow's horns to the cart . . . then put the knife to her throat: the cow fell down, and I too at that moment fell down from the hayrick. . . .

" I used to carry milk to the neighbours to sell it; also raspberries, gooseberries, and cucumbers. All was well so long as the cow lived. . . .

" One of my childhood's traits was my absorption in imagination. It was not fantasy, but dreaming. It seems to me that such a ' thoughtful boy ' as myself never existed. I ' thought eternally,' but what of, I do not know. Yet the dreams were neither silly, nor empty."

Rozanov entered the public school at Simbirsk. In his third form he read most carefully Buckle's *History of Civilization*, as well as Karl Fogt and Pisarev, and he used to make notes on the books he had read. His enthusiasm for materialism made him quarrel with his eldest brother, who used to laugh at Buckle and Pisarev. Yet Rozanov's infatuation for materialism did not last long. . . . In his sixth form, at the Novgorod public school, he no longer could stand Pisarev's writings. . . .

The university played no important part in Rozanov's life. " Formal," " academic " instruction could not satisfy him. " It is not the universities," he says in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. i, " that have brought up the genuine Russians, but the good, old, illiterate nurses."

The Russian public schools and universities Rozanov regarded as "nihilism, negation, and a jibe at Russia."

"How nice it is," he says in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. i, "that I slept through my university course. At the lectures I used to pick my nose, and at the exams I answered from cribs. What university man does not know that our 'Russian Imperial Universities' were in olden times a kind of foundling home, and in our time they become a factory for manufacturing diplomas, a department of patent mediocrities?"

Rozanov considered that the autonomy of the universities did not at all signify the freedom of teaching and the independence of the professorial corporation, a corporation which had neither a *credo* nor an *amo*; but just signified the autonomy of the students, which was the *causa materialis* and *causa finalis* of that institution.

"Of what do those men think," Rozanov said indignantly in a private conversation about Russian professors. "The fellow has been sitting for twenty-five years, like a log, in his chair, and repeating what he has once fished out from German text books. And you never see one taking a pen in his hand and writing something of his own." . . .

Yet Rosanov completed his studies at the Moscow University, in the faculty of history and philology, and became a teacher of history and geography. But teaching was not his vocation, and he did not feel fit for the part. In one of his notes on Strakhov's letters (*Literary Exiles*, vol. i), Rozanov says: "I never

could control my attention (hence naturally I was an impossible teacher); on the contrary, a mysterious attention, with its autonomous laws, either completely unknown, or not revealed to me, controlled me. And not a single intention in my life was fulfilled by me. But I did fulfil and perform with fervour, with passion just what I did not want or imagine, or what I almost did not desire or desired very little. I must remark that 'doing everything with passion,' I, mysteriously, did it also coldly; and nothing could prevent me from passionately participating, say, in a patriotic procession and passing immediately (under a momentary influence) into participation in a cosmopolitan procession."

Only an extreme individualist could have made the following admission (in the same note on Strakhov's eighty-eighth letter): "a 'sympathetic face' could drag me into the Revolution, as it could drag me to the Church; and I, strictly speaking, always went to people and after people, but not to a 'system' and not for a system of convictions. For instance, all my polemics (bitter and lasting many years) against Vengerov and Kareyev arose from this that they both were fat, and I simply can't stand fat writers. But their 'labours' were not at all unpleasant to me (or were 'all the same' to me)."

In another passage (in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. ii), Rozanov says again of Vengerov: "His labours are to be respected. And the fact that he has been working all his life on Pushkin is even touching. In personal contact (once) he produced on me an

almost pleasant impression. But I have only to glance at his belly and I am already writing (in my mind) a fiery article." And further: "Why don't I like Vengerov? It is, strange to say, simply because he is so fat and black (like a big-bellied beetle)."

Rozanov's subjection to a "mysterious attention" was all through his life "a very painful peculiarity" of his. That "mysterious attention," directed as it were to something deep down in himself, to something eternally listening, is a typical characteristic of mystically attuned, dreamy, self-probing natures.

Rozanov thought that this "peculiarity" of his practically shattered his whole life: "I could never say to myself," he declared, "you must listen," and actually do so; "you must do something," and—do it. Strange as it is, yet for forty years I have lived "by chance," "from moment to moment"; it has been a forty-years-old chain of accidental and unexpected things; I married "by chance," I fell in love "by chance." I got into the conservative movement in literature "by chance"; some one (the Merezhkovskies) came and took me into the very advanced *Mir Iskusstva* and *Novy Pout*, where I collaborated "by chance," *i.e.*, in the chain of facts of my inner life, "I did not foresee it even yesterday," "I did not look for it to-day."

In 1886 appeared Rozanov's book *On Understanding*, the result of five years' labour. That book, according to Rozanov, was a polemic of 737 pages directed against the Moscow University.

The book was ignored and unappreciated. The author received from the bookseller a sack of unsold copies (the edition consisted of 600), and a second sackful Rozanov sold at the Sukharev market for fifteen roubles for wrapping up novels.

After the publication of *On Understanding* Rozanov had meant to write *On Potentiality and its rôle in the physical world and the world of man*—a book which was not destined to be written. This is what he wrote in a note on *Literary Exiles*.

" Potentialities are invisible, half-existing, quarter-existing, co-existing forms (substances) round the visible (real). The world ' as it is ' is only a particle and moment of the ' potential world,' which world is the proper object of a complete philosophy and a complete science. The study of the transitions from the potential into the real world, the laws of the transition and the conditions of the transition, generally, of all that emerges in the stage of transition, filled my thought and imagination.

" And, in a word, it seemed to me that my philosophy would embrace the angels and trade."

Rozanov's work as teacher in provincial public schools was uncongenial to him. The relations between him and his pupils were not bad, but apart from the " lovely faces and dear souls " of the pupils, everything in his teaching disgusted him, was strange, and annoying beyond measure. " Teaching," he wrote, " is form, and I am formless. In teaching there must be order and a system, and I am systemless and even disorderly. There is duty,—and to me

any duty at the bottom of my heart always seemed comical, and on any duty at the bottom of my heart I always wanted to play a trick (except tragic duty). . . ."

"Every hour, and on every turn the 'teacher' denied me, and I denied the 'teacher.' There was a mutual destruction of the 'work and the worker.' Something hellish! It seemed to me that I could collect all the pupils and fly away with them into the regions of philosophy, fairy tales, stories, adventures 'in forests and at night time,' to the angels and the devils, and above all into dreaming. But at nine in the morning—'I stand at prayers, take the class register; listen to the rivers which fall into the Volga, then to the system of the great lakes in North America, the States and their cities, Boston, Texas, Salt Lake, the number of pigs in Chicago; the steel industry in Sheffield; then kings, tsars, popes, generals, peace treaties, 'on which river this battle took place,' 'from which hill that general looked,' 'what Napoleon said when he stood by the pyramids,' and finally . . . 'the director is looking from the door to see how I conduct my lesson.'". . .

Rozanov spent thirteen years teaching in provincial public schools. And during that period he wrote his *Twilight of Enlightenment*, *The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, *The Aesthetic Conception of History*, *The Place of Christianity in History*, and a series of small articles. As years went by he was more and more drawn to problems of religion and Christian mysticism, to the revelation of the invisible things. A

real longing for religion seized him at the time when it became clear to him—as he says in his note on Strakhov's fifty-fifth letter, that

> *Sunt destinationes rerum,*
> *Sunt metae rerum.*
> *Primae sunt divinae,*
> *Secundae sunt humanae;*

and when he suddenly distinguished the divine world in nature from the accidental-arbitrary-human world. According to Rozanov, this happened at that truly sacred hour, the hour "when having suddenly stopped making my cigarettes, I fixed my glance on the distance, and in my mind the *destinationes* and *metae* separated and showed the gulf that existed between them. From that moment until today (until the age of fifty-seven), my conception of the world was being unfolded: I boundlessly gave myself to the *destinationes* . . . and looked with hostility at the *metae*. . . . For two years I have been happy with 'that hour,' for two years I have been 'in Easter,' 'in the pealing of bells,' truly 'arrayed in white vestments,' for I saw the *destinationes*, eternal, ascending from the earth to heaven, and as plants the tops of which were held by God, the Holder of All. Hence, as I can remember, came my solemn style; for he to whom the *destinationes* have been revealed has no right to speak in the ordinary language of the market place, but only in the language of the temple, for he is a priest, appointed not by men, but chosen by God: *i.e.*, it is to him alone that the divine will

(the *destinationes* in the world) had revealed itself. . . . I remember perfectly well and distinctly that from that moment I became religious, definitely and deliberately religious; whilst up to that moment I had only ' played about with atheism, public-school atheism,' not knowing what to do with it, and above all how to get rid of it. ' How to get rid ' was solved in that hour."

The state thus described bears all the character of a mystical experience, with its typical features: intuition, ecstasy, momentariness, and almost inarticulateness. To a religious nature there is no more important experience than a mystical one. In the life of the greatest mystics there have been experiences identical with the one described by Rozanov. . . .

Owing to Strakhov's efforts Rozanov, who for years had longed to live and work in the capital, was finally appointed to a post in the State Control Office in Petersburg, and accordingly moved there in 1893, when after years of correspondence the two men at last met. In his note on Strakhov's letter of 15th May 1893, Rozanov says: " After all it must be that I am more sympathetic in person, than I am in my writings. . . . Now with my arrival in Petersburg, Strakhov adopted a much warmer attitude towards me. Hence this reminder for my critics: ' not everything in Rozanov is as bad as it seems in his writings.' After all man is better and more genuine than his books ' ! "

At that time a circle of writers had been formed in

Petersburg to which belonged N. P. Aksakov, I. F. Romanov (Rzy), S. F. Sharapov, and A. Vassiliev. Strakhov, too, eventually joined that circle of "living Slavophiles"; for after the death of N. Y. Danilevsky and K. N. Leontiev, Strakhov remained the sole representative of pure Slavophilism. In 1894 Rozanov brought out, at his own expense, his *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, which owing to his poor circumstances—his salary being one hundred roubles a month—was a severe strain on his resources. Those difficult circumstances were reflected in his work and mood of that time.

In his letter of July 1894, Strakhov reproves Rozanov for his "hurried articles." In a note on that letter Rozanov says: "All those hurried articles are to be explained by my extreme material want, the like of which I never before experienced in my life; and I look back now at the years 1893-1899 with horror (I started work in the *Novoye Vremya* in 1899, having left my post in the Control). Our soul is in the clutches of life; in the clutches of a flat, of dinner, in the clutches of debts to the butcher and greengrocer." . . .

Rozanov regarded Strakhov with love and respect. "The secret of Strakhov," he says," was in his wise life and in the wisdom of his way of thinking." Strakhov had a very high opinion of Rozanov's brilliant talent, but feared that he was unstable and ill-balanced.

On his photograph, presented by Strakhov to Rozanov, we read: "I love your talent very much,

Vasili Vasilievich, but I am afraid that nothing will come of it " (October 1895).

To this time also belongs Rozanov's friendship with the young writer, the student F. E. Shperk, whom he considered more gifted, more original than himself (see *Solitaria*). Shperk died from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-six, and as a writer is quite unknown. Evidently under Rozanov's influence Shperk became a Slavophile and then embraced Orthodoxy. " I loved him madly," says Rozanov in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. ii.

* * *

Towards the end of the 'nineties Rozanov began to work for the *Novoye Vremya*. The invitation to write for that paper he had received as long ago as 1893, but somehow paid no attention to it. In his note on Souvorin's letter of 17th August 1893, he says: " Only now, reading the letter in proof, have I noticed the definite suggestion contained there to write for the paper, of which I, inexplicably to myself, never availed myself till 1899; *i.e.*, for six whole years I overlooked this suggestion; and yet those six years were positively poisoned by material want (as was also my literary activity). If I could have thought of writing 'notices' for the paper, I should have been saved; but at that time I could not write 'notices,' only 'treatises.'" Of one of such " treatises " Souvorin, in his letter of 12th August 1898, writes to Rozanov: " It is either a sermon from the pulpit, or a profound philosophy, which requires commentaries. Do agree, that if Burenin and myself

cannot make it out, the great mass of our readers are sure not to understand it either."

All his life long Rozanov regarded Souvorin with deep respect, valuing in him his " rare modesty and nobility." As an illustration, he relates the following fact. After Mikhailovsky's [1] death Rozanov wrote a very cordial article on him on the ground of " de mortuis, etc.," although he had for years carried on a most severe polemic against him. Souvorin passed that article, although under some pretext he might have suppressed it.

In the beginning of his infatuation for Egypt Rozanov wrote in the *Novoye Vremya* under the pseudonym of " Ibis." The articles were varied in their themes and rich in their contents; but Souvorin had at times to protest against certain passages or too outspoken expressions.

When Rozanov's book *In the World of the Indefinite and the Unsolved* was published, E. L. Radlov drew the attention of D. Kobeko to some of the concluding pages of the book. Kobeko was in a fury and told Witte of it. Witte, who was Minister of Finance at that time, forwarded the book to K. P. Pobedonoszev, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, drawing his attention to the last three pages of the book. Pobedonoszev sent the book to the chief of the Press Department. Both Witte and Stolypin considered Rosanov " a terrible pornographic writer."

As a result the book was suppressed a month after its publication.

[1] Mikhailovsky, an advanced socialist and influential literary critic.

"Yet," writes Rozanov in his note on Souvorin's thirty-first letter, "the religion of 'the opening bud' is the complete denial—a denial to the very root, and to the end of time—of pornography, a complete denial of the bourgeois and low, salacious and hooliganish attitude towards sex, towards sexual organs, towards sexual acts. It is sex 'transfigured,' where the objects and names are the same as in pornography, but at the same time they are perfectly different, regarded under a different aspect, in a different spirit. They are as much related to one another as a Petersburg brothel, say, and the Bible story of Ruth and Boaz. To Russians this can be explained by saying that in certain moments one and the same thing is done by Artsybashev's Sanin and by Pushkin's Tatyana—but what a difference there is in what is done! The same thing is done in marriage and in a 'gay house,' but again what a difference! Society, the public, the critics, finally the official censorship cannot and do not wish to distinguish that difference, and they accuse me of talking of a 'brothel' when I am speaking of the Egyptian 'bud' (marriage)."

In 1902 two books of Rozanov's, mostly consisting of his published articles, and entitled *Nature and History* and *Religion and Culture* were published. A year later appeared his two volumes on *The Family Question in Russia*. In 1909 he brought out *The Russian Church*, along with *When the Officials Retired* and *Italian Impressions*.

In 1911 appeared the first part of his *Metaphysics of*

Christianity, entitled *The Dark Image*, and later its continuation, entitled *Men of the Moonlight.*

In 1912 *Solitaria* was published; *Fallen Leaves*, part I, made its appearance in 1913, and *Fallen Leaves*, part II, in 1915.

The three last-named books furnish abundant material for making an acquaintance with the personality of their author. In concise fragments and notes Rozanov fixes separate outstanding moments of his life and of the life of his intimates. *Solitaria* and *Fallen Leaves* are permeated by that " spirit of trifles, charming and light " which better than any solemn chronicle reflects the soul of the author and of the epoch. To careless and inattentive readers these books will yield very little, or perhaps nothing. But he who would be guided by the penetrating principle of the mystics—" ab exterioribus ad interiora "—will soon see that Rosanov is one of those few writers in whom the " continual *fiens* " is for ever and always overcome by the " eternal *ens*."

In trying to understand Rozanov on the principle of *ab exterioribus ad interioria* we soon realize that it needed the true penetration of genius, the clairvoyance of genius to see in the thousand trifling, everyday occurrences, which nearly everyone passes by with utter indifference, to see in these the imprint of the " other world," to find their profound significance, to divine their fleeting value. We soon realize that the author of these as it were incoherent and absurd notes written now while " examining my coins," now " on the back of the lined sheet,"

now " in the street," now " on the heel of my slipper (while bathing)," now even " in the W.C."—that the author is a most unique observer and thinker in the full and perfect sense of the word.

In *Solitaria* we read: " I am choked in thought. And how pleasant to me to live in that choked state. That is why my life, despite its thorns and tears, is after all a joy." He has no desire for fame, or popularity: " I longed for nothing as much as for *humiliation.* ' Fame ' at times gladdened me with a purely piggish pleasure. But this never lasted long (a day or two); then would come the former longing —to be humiliated." But neither has he got that assumed modesty, in which there is more hypocrisy than virtue: he knows his worth quite well: " I may be a ' fool ' (there are rumours); perhaps even a ' swindler ' (there is gossip to that effect); but the width of thought, the incommensurability of horizons revealed—no one has had that before me in the way I possess it. And all of it came from my own mind, without borrowing an iota even. I am simply a wonderful man." People accuse Rozanov of inconstancy, perfidiousness, even of lying, and this is what he says about it: " It is surprising how I managed to accommodate myself to falsehood. It has never worried me. And for this odd reason: ' What business is it of yours what precisely I think? Why am I *obliged* to tell you my real thoughts? ' My profound subjectivity (the pathos of subjectivity) has had this effect that I have gone through my whole life as though behind a curtain, irremovable, untear-

able: 'Nobody dare touch that curtain.' There I lived, there *with myself* I was truthful." . . .

And from this most profound subjectivity springs Rozanov's attitude to morals: "I am not such a scoundrel yet as to think about morals."

But completely ignoring the conventional notion of morality, Rozanov is drawn with his whole being to religious problems. To him they present the only interest, profound and acute: "Do you know," he asks, "that religion is the most important, the most essential, the most needful? With the person who does not know this, not the alpha of discussion or conversation should be entertained. Such a person should simply be ignored. Passed over in silence. Yet who does know it? Are there many who do? That is why in our time there is almost *nothing* to speak about, nor *anyone* to speak with." . . .

Positivism, and everything connected with positivism, was revolting to Rozanov.

The puzzle of Rozanov's attraction to the subject of sexual life is solved in the following words: "The connexion of sex with God—greater than the connexion of the mind with God, greater even than the connexion of conscience with God—is gathered from this that all a-sexualists reveal themselves also as atheists. Such gentlemen as Buckle or Spencer, as Pisarev or Belinsky, who have said about 'sex' no more words than about the Argentine, are at the same time so astonishingly atheistical as though there had not been before them or near them any religion."

After the publication of *Fallen Leaves* the critics

began more and more to accuse Rozanov of " pornography." But those accusations came from people to whom sexual life and the cult of sex appeared nasty and evil. To Rozanov, on the contrary, sexual life breathes of the fragrance of religion, and shines as brightly as the sun. His accusers should be reminded of the words of the Apostle: " there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean," and also: " unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

The indifference to morality, characteristic of Rozanov, does not mean his indifference to truth. . . . And to Rozanov, a thorough Russian, with all the great qualities and great defects which are peculiar to the Russian spirit, to him truth is above everything: " Truth is higher than the sun, higher than the heaven, higher than God: for if God too began *not* with truth, then he is not God, and heaven is a swamp, and the sun a brass plate."

No one would accuse Rozanov of banality, but he is often accused of cynicism. But this is almost praise, for cynicism and banality are essentially opposing categories: mediocre natures are incapable of cynicism, but can be utterly banal. Cynicism after all requires a good soil for its growth. Cynicism, I should say, grows up on a soil of spiritual abundance. It is a morbid reaction to the monstrosities and grimaces of life. . . . A morbid reaction, yet needing courage and wit. Short-sighted observers often

confuse cynicism with banality. Banality can be compared to a dead nettle or a thistle or a weed—common, to be found everywhere and very ordinary. Cynicism may be compared to a cactus, the strange form of which, in spite of its ugliness, is fascinating. " Cynicism through suffering. . . . Did it ever occur to you? " Rozanov asks in *Solitaria*, and the fact that this question is still unanswered, shows that no one had thought of propounding it previous to the writing of *Solitaria*. In *Fallen Leaves*, part II, we read: " There are people who are born ' rightly ' and others who are born not ' rightly.' I was born not ' rightly '—hence such a strange, prickly ' biography,' and yet rather ' interesting.' And feeling that lack of ' rightness,' a writer knows that only ' disturbance ' comes from him." . . . " I could fill the world with crimson clouds of smoke. . . . But I don't want to do it." About his critics (whose names are legion now), Rozanov says: " They have no divination of me at all. They either make me out a ' Byron ' soaring up, or a ' Satan,' black and in flames. But there is nothing like this in me: I am quite a nice fellow. What a lot of black beetles have I dragged out from my bath, so as not to drown a single one of them, when turning on the water. Choukovsky was the only one who guessed, or rather was able to name the ' composition of my bones,' my nature, blood, temperament. Some of his definitions are astonishing. My themes?—they are visible to everyone, and indeed they don't matter a damn. ' There are all sorts of themes,' I shall say cynically this time. But

he has not guessed my intimate secret—which is pain, pain without cause, indefinite and ceaseless. It seems to me that this is my most striking—at any rate, inexplicable characteristic. It seems to me that I was born with pain." . . . (*Fallen Leaves*, part II). In *Solitaria* we read: "I am not needed; of nothing am I more convinced than of this that I am not needed."

Without declaring himself the possessor of lofty truths, Rozanov confesses: "I do not want truth, I want peace." Not only is he not attracted by abstract truth, but even to its themes he is indifferent: "I fled round themes, but did not fly towards themes. The very flight—that is my life. As to themes—they are just like a dream. One, two, many . . . but I have forgotten them all. I shall forget them as I near the grave. In the other world I shall be without themes. And God will ask me: "What have you done?" "Nothing," will be my reply.

That "nothing" must be taken as Rozanov's disgust with all that is dogmatic, planned, and systematic. . . . Rozanov's creation represents something chaotic. A systematic approach to that creation is almost impossible, so scattered, so dispersed are his works. Often the basic idea is hidden under a heap of fragmentary sketches and notes. Rozanov's philosophy is a confused piling up of hasty ideas. But in it there is none of the pernicious pedantry, and dogmatic deadliness, which is characteristic of most philosophical works. His living thought,

multifaced, multicoloured, multitoned, pulsates in every line of Rozanov's. In his thought there may be morbidity, perversity, a great deal of the spirit of Dostoevsky, its lapses are serious and its flights high. The "Dostoevsky" element in Rozanov is so strong that at one time the critics were inclined to regard Rozanov as the "shadow" of Dostoevsky, even as his imitator. But, in fact, Rozanov was incapable of imitation. And to Dostoevsky he was bound by a basic spiritual kinship. Many times in the press and in talks with friends Rozanov spoke of his close, intimate, psychological bond with Dostoevsky's creations. Once I remember he said to me, as he stroked a volume of *The Journal of an Author*: "learn to value this book. I never part with it." Dostoevsky was always on his table.

Declaring that writers who stand alone and belong to no parties or groups might indeed hail our progress with the words *Morituri te salutant*, Rozanov maintained that if the millions of reading Russians were to read, with the same attention, ardour, and passion—to read carefully and to reflect on every page of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, as they now read and reflect on every page of Gorky and Andreyev, then our public would grow into a tremendously serious entity; for, even without any school instruction, the mere reflection on the whole of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky would make one a Socrates or an Epictetus. His personal impression of the creation of these two titans of Russian literature Rozanov formulated thus: "Tolstoy surprises; Dostoevsky

moves." Tolstoy's works he compared to a perfectly planned building. Of Dostoevsky he said that he was " a rider in the desert with one quiver of arrows. And blood flows wherever his arrow strikes."

Rozanov disliked Tolstoy's tendency to preach, to teach. There was nothing in Tolstoy which was dear to him; but Dostoevsky ever lived within him: Dostoevsky's music ever played in his soul. Knowing his feeling for Dostoevsky, I once asked him: " Who of Dostoevsky's heroes is most dear to you, whose psychology is nearer and more akin to yours? " Without hesitating a moment, Rozanov answered, with his peculair impulsive and soft intonation: " Shatov, of course."

There is no doubt that with all his much talked-of " anti-Christianity " Rozanov loved Christ with that living, passionate, boundlessly devoted love with which one can love only a unique, incomparable being. In Rozanov's opinion it is no matter that Christianity has turned the world into ashes, has dried up the flowers of joy, that Golgotha has dimmed the sunlit vistas of the universe; for it is just because Jesus the Sweetest was so inexpressibly sweet that life has become so flavourless. Here is Rozanov's secret thought, here is his consolation. Yes, he loved " the green voices of the spring " and the " gummy leaves "; yes, he adored the fruitful womb (by the way, he loved Dostoevsky just because, as he put it, Dostoevsky is " a pregnant big-loined writer "). Rozanov grieved that Christ never laughed, never smiled, never took a lyre or reed into his hand; that there are no music or songs in Chris-

tianity, that the life of the flesh is driven out from the cycle of evangelical joys. But in his withdrawal from Christ, in his denial, he delicately felt the personal fascination of Christ and closely approached the most intimate traits of Christ's personality. To the "non-accepting" Rozanov Christ was as essential, needed, and personal as he was to the "accepting" Dostoevsky.

Rozanov and Dostoevsky approached Christ from different, but equally close angles. A certain hint of that intimacy, the psychological likeness of that intimacy, is contained in the mystical love which some people feel for one another, sometimes quite hopelessly, but always boundlessly and irresistibly. Such a love exists in Shatov's relations to Stavrogin, with such a love Aliosha Karamazov loved his father. But these are only mere allusive images of what Rozanov and Dostoevsky contained in the subtlest complication of their souls.

The complication and tangle of Rozanov's religious position consisted in this that, most intimately and mystically loving Christ, he did not accept Him with his mind. But there is no doubt that the spiritual bond between Dostoevsky and Rozanov just consisted in that "contact" with Christ. The difference being that in Dostoevsky's religious probings the "contact" was manifested in a *positive form*, while in Rozanov's penetrating anti-Christianity it found expression in a *negative* form. . . .

* * *

However you may regard Rozanov's views, you

can't help being charmed by his style, a style not exempt from grammatical errors and inexactitudes, yet remarkably vigorous and direct, colourful, and picturesque. After Pushkin and Turgenev, who seemed to have created the final expressiveness of the Russian language, Rozanov has revealed in it new beauties, has made it a quite different language, and this without any effort, without any care for style. *Solitaria* and *Fallen Leaves* are the summits of Rozanov's stylistic mastery. . . . "The best in me," wrote Rozanov in his letter to me of 16th July 1915, "is *Solitaria*." In another letter, in the autumn of 1918, not long before his death, he dwells on his style, on the meaning and significance of his *Fallen Leaves*. . . . "Mysteriously and beautifully, mysteriously and egotistically I gave in *Fallen Leaves* the whole of myself. Indeed, *The Apocalypse of Our Times* is also *Fallen Leaves*—only on one definite subject—on the rebellion against Christianity; and so are also my *Oriental Motifs*, which disclose the secret of the ancient religions. . . . And I have simply lost any other form of literary work: 'I can't do it,' 'there's nothing doing.' And yet this is the simplest and only form. Anything simpler cannot be invented. 'The form of Adam'—in paradise, and since paradise. Since paradise there has only been added the chair, on which the writer sits down and begins to write. Indeed, what else are poets doing than writing 'fallen leaves.' And you, writing of Rozanov, indeed do not at all write of him, but you write your own fallen leaves; what 'I think,' 'feel,'

'live,' 'do.' This form is both full of egoism and yet without egoism. Essentially, everything is man's concern, and nothing is his concern. Essentially, occupied with himself alone, he is occupied at the same time with the whole world. I remember quite well, from my childhood, that I had no concern with anything. And yet this mysteriously and fully merged with 'everything is my concern.' Now through this peculiar fusion of egoism and non-egoism *Fallen Leaves* is particularly fine."

"I do not remember who it was, Gershenson or V. Ivanov, who wrote to me that 'people thought that the forms of literary work had already been exhausted,' 'that the drama, poem, and lyrics were exhausted' and nothing could be found, invented, discovered there, and that to the existing forms I had added the '11th' or '12th' form. Gershenson also said that it was quite classical in its simplicity, artlessness. This delighted me, for he is an expert. And along with this, what happened? Not a single Pharaoh, not a single Napoleon immortalized himself like that. In a pyramid there is a void which is not filled; Napoleon had days of non-existence. Yet *Fallen Leaves* will appeal to a small man, to a small life. This for the small as well as for the great soul is as it were the achievement of the boundary of eternity. And it simply consists in this that 'the river should flow as it does'; that 'everything should be as it is.' Without inventions. Yet 'man is always inventing.' And here is that peculiarity that even the inventions do not violate the truth, the

facts: every dream, wish, cobweb of thought has its place here. It is by no means a 'Journal,' or 'Memoirs,' or a penitent confession—it is just only 'leaves,' 'fallen,' 'it was' and 'is no longer,' it lived and 'ceased to live,' it is less than a pyramid and more than a pyramid; above all, it is more complex, and at the same time 'you can put it in your pocket.' And when I think that I have done this on my own, have done it since 1911, then certainly not a single man will to such an extent and in such a way *express* himself, in such a way and yet *subjectively*. And it seems to me that it is God who has granted me this as a reward for my whole labour and sweat and for truth."

The continuation of *Fallen Leaves* is *The Apocalypse of Our Times*, published in 1918 in Sergiev Posad. With *The Apocalypse*, and his unfinished work *Oriental Motifs*, Rozanov's creative work was concluded. To Rozanov the destiny of his books, that is, of his ideas, was his personal destiny. Therefore in the examination of his life the biographical data must not be separated from his literary activity. His life was not rich in external events. His travels in Italy, France, and Germany gave him a series of occasions for interesting articles; but those were only occasions, which awakened in his soul certain motifs, moods, ideas—but yielded nothing essentially new. Rozanov's soul did not need external impulses—it was rich by nature, and created out of itself. The Vatican and the Coliseum were to Rozanov's creation just of the same importance as any flat in any Petersburg street. He lived wholly

"within himself." And "within himself" he remained till the end of his days. Sergiev Posad, whereto he moved in the beginning of 1918, brought nothing new to his moods; in the stillness of a thoroughly Christian and Orthodox little town, Rozanov wrote his perhaps most "anti-Christian" pages—*The Apocalypse of Our Times*. He thought that we all were slowly but surely dying, passing into the night, into non-being, and yet doing this as "braggarts," as "actors," without a cross or prayer. And that we were dying from this sole cause—from disrespect for ourselves, from nihilism.

The theme of the *Apocalypse* is interwoven of religious-philosophical and social-political problems. The title, according to Rozanov, needs no explanation in view of the events in Russia which have not a sham but real apocalyptical significance. From the former Christianity have been formed gigantic voids, into which thrones, classes, groups, labour, riches are tumbling. All this is tumbling down into the emptiness of the soul, deprived of its old contents. In his article, *The Disrupted Kingdom*, Rozanov laments over the fall of Russia, blaming Russian literature for it, and fixes his gaze on the ages gone by, on the Apocalypse, that mysterious heart-searing book. He thinks that the Apocalypse is not a Christian book, that the Christ of the Apocalypse has nothing in common with the Christ of the Evangel. Rozanov particularly attacks Christianity for its impotence to help man, for its abstractions, for its ignorance of the cosmos.

The sun was lighted before Christianity and it will

not be extinguished, were even Christianity to come to an end.

" Try to crucify the sun," he says in a note, " and you will see which is God."

In this, to him, is the limitation of Christianity. With Christianity alone man can't live. . . . The sun is greater than Christ, and more than Christ does it desire man's happiness. . . . Speaking of the works of the spirit as opposed to those of the flesh Christ thereby showed that He and the Father were not one. The Father's teaching differs from the Son's by its ceaseless solicitude for man, which envelops and embraces him. To Rozanov this is significant and valuable, for he is convinced that that solicitude, and, generally, the physiology with which the Old Testament is permeated, is cosmical. To him the earthly is the pledge, and not the antithesis of the heavenly. The heavenly emerges from the earthly, as a butterfly from a caterpillar.

In his adoration of the earthly Rozanov does not see that his view is correct only in the category of the earthly, material, concrete, and empirical; and that his so very simplified conception cannot be applied to the noümenal world. If the Father is a noümen, then the Son is a phenomenal image, *i.e.*, not the completion, but the reflection of the Father. Love and hatred of Christ lived inseparably in Rozanov's contradictory soul. " Thou alone art beautiful, Lord Jesus," he exclaims, " and Thou hast profaned the world by Thy beauty." And he adds: " And yet the world is God's." He believes

that Christ has arisen, but he does not rejoice in it: Christ terrifies him. Christ, according to him, has "emasculated God," "He is terrifying," He is not the lover of men, but a seductive enemy. Perfectly different is Moses, "the greatest of the ancients"; he was not eloquent and fascinating like Christ; on the contrary, he was tongue-tied, and stammered; and "by this combination of the innocent and funny we recognize the Divine book and the Divine acts."

Rozanov in his *Apocalypse* dwells at length on the destinies of the Russian people. It seems to him that the Russian people cannot rule, has no talent for ruling: it is just satisfied with mere gossip and talk.

One of the numbers composing *The Apocalypse of Our Times*, ends with the following words: "I am exhausted. I can't go on any longer. Two or three handfuls of flour, two or three handfuls of buckwheat, or five hard boiled eggs can often save my day. . . . Reader, save your writer" . . . (and then follows Rozanov's address). There were people who laughed, in the Press, at this request, and who accused Rozanov of "begging." This "begging" was merely the desperate cry of a man, who passionately wanted to live and to work, but could not; for he was starving, suffering from hunger, cold, and exhaustion. Rozanov dreamed of crowning his life-work with a grandiose elaboration of his theme. He believed in the coming regeneration of Russia, in spite of everything. The apocalyptical revolution was taking place before his very eyes, and yet he believed in the value of that revolution. To one

of his friends he wrote that he wanted to write such an apology for the Revolution, as the Revolution itself could not dream of.

Love and hatred were strangely combined in his enigmatic soul. Duality existed in his attitude to Russia, to the Revolution, to the Jews; in a word, to everything his active, inquiring, rebellious soul came into contact with. In that contradictoriness there was no lie, nothing double-faced, insincere, casual: he just strove to fathom the depths of things, their very essence; and the ultimate secrets surely are antinomian, and cannot be known by mere assertion or negation. . . . In his most intimate, in his religious profundity, he tenderly loved Christ, and yet rejected historical Christianity. . . .

* * *

Rozanov was more interested in the private affairs of writers, than in their works. He knew quite well *where* to find the key to the understanding of the individual peculiarities of authors. And doubtless he was right in raising the question of "underclothing," although this indiscreet question often leads to revolting answers. . . . And indeed to differentiate "the author" from "the man" is as strange as to differentiate a flower from its roots, and to maintain that these are two completely different growths.

That is why I should like to fix as distinctly as I can Rozanov's "face," to record his words, habits, sympathies.

My first meeting with Rozanov took place in

Vyriza, a summer resort, at his bungalow, where I arrived in July 1915, in response to his invitation.

He had just got up from his afternoon doze, and I could hear him splashing his face behind the wall of the little study where I sat waiting for him. Soon there came in an elderly man, not tall, of a most peaceful and genial appearance. I had expected to see a tall " Oblomov," with a ginger-coloured mane and blue eyes. Instead, there stood before me a straight, energetic, rather thin man with a grey head, with a yellow-grey moustache and a little beard. In his mobile face black (brown) eyes shone cunningly and sensibly. He seemed to me restless and concentrated at the same time. The first words he said were: " I'm glad to make your acquaintance. . . . You're a German, a Lutheran, aren't you? "

At the very opening of our conversation it became clear that Rozanov valued most in man his attraction to religion, and repulsion from positivism.

The conversation turned on the Church, on the University, students, on Vladimir Soloviov, Bergson, Maeterlinck. I looked at Rozanov eagerly. " So this is the man," I thought, " around whom three or four years ago (before his expulsion from the Religious Philosophic Society in 1913) the Petersburg aristocracy of mind and talent used to gather; the man in whose study, as one witness put it, used to go on the most ' amazing ' conversations, conversations unique in their content, originality, and heat."

ROZANOV

Rozanov read to me a few passages from *Fallen Leaves*, part II, which was just out. . . .

Everything in Rozanov seemed to me then extraordinary, except his appearance. His appearance was rather ordinary, the type of an old official or schoolmaster; he might also have passed as a beadle or verger. Only his eyes, deep, probing, seemed not those of an official or of a schoolmaster. He had the habit of getting into another's soul at once, without preliminaries, just "in his overcoat and goloshes," without hesitating for a second.

"The overcoat and goloshes" habit in him was bewildering and not always pleasant. As to the rest he was fascinating: the fireworks of his uttered words, of which each had its perfume, taste, colour, weight, is unforgettable. He was in a state of unceasing, continuous creation, so that in his company it was rather difficult to think: all the same you could not keep time with his ideas; the torrent of his own ideas overflowed any one else's ideas, and I think he never listened to others. But to hear him was sheer delight.

He did not in the least "play the part" of a famous writer, he did not show off, coquet. In everything he was simple, unconstrained, without any fear of being tactless or "bad form." He passed sharply from one mood into another, from tenderness to irritation, from sadness to merriment. His thought (in conversation) always proceeded in zigzags, in bumps. At times he would say something so unexpected and odd that he just seemed crazy,

silly, or abnormal. One of his habits was continuous smoking, almost without a break: nearly all day long he was rolling short cigarettes, and smoked one after another. His way of walking was peculiar—quick and almost shy, yet direct. He usually sat with one leg under him, and shaking the other.

After our meeting at Vyriza I often went to see Rozanov in Petersburg. In 1917 he was completely absorbed in his *Oriental Motifs*, which he began then to publish in small numbers (it stopped with the third issue). He was engrossed in Egyptian art, he loved and pondered over each detail, was in raptures over the various symbols and rites of ancient Egypt, abusing the learned Egyptologists, particularly Maspero and Champollion. . . . His, the Rozanovian, Egyptology was, indeed, original; it was a sort of phallic lyricism (the image of the phallus drove him to ecstasy); it was an almost actual contact with the sanctities of the ancient world, a feeling for it which bordered on real tenderness. . . .

Rozanov's flat resembled the host: there was nothing banal in it, and it was difficult to say which was the drawing-room, or study, or bedroom. In the drawing-room there was a library, a mass of books, a mask of Strakhov, a statuette of the Madonna, a collection of old coins. Here visitors used to sit; it was a place for talking. Rozanov's study (which was also his bedroom) was his workroom and the place for friendly and intimate conversation.

In his study were only his most favourite books. Dostoevsky's *Journal of an Author* was on his table, also

the Bible. Over the table was a large portrait of A. A. Rudnev, his mother-in-law, on the table stood photographs of his daughters. . . .

Of Tolstoy Rozanov spoke variously, now with irritation, now with reverence. "The old man was wonderful," said Rozanov to me, describing a meeting with Tolstoy. "When I said good-bye to him, I embraced him and kissed his hand, the noble hand which had written *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenin* and so many other things, which made people happy and say to one another 'how good it is that I am alive, whilst he lives, not before, not before him; and now I am so happy with these pages of art and wisdom.'" Yet this did not prevent Rozanov from declaring (in *Solitaria*) that "Tolstoy has lived an utterly banal life." He tries to persuade us that Tolstoy knew no suffering, no crown of thorns, and no heroic struggle for his convictions, and that people loved him very little and that his death did not really upset anyone.

Once showing me Tolstoy's photograph, Rozanov said: "He sent me this photograph through Strakhov, but did not inscribe it. Never mind. After all, you know, he was a giant!"

The same duality marked Rozanov's attitude to Vladimir Soloviov. Certain of Soloviov's ideas he stubbornly ignored, despised, or rather was bored by them. He said that Soloviov "lacked the Russian spirit," "Russian warmth," and he considered him an "international, European writer, brilliant, cold, steely." Soloviov, according to

Rozanov, was a " strange, very gifted and terrible man." . . .

When Rozanov was working on his *Oriental Motifs*, and was wholly absorbed in Egypt and spoke of nothing else, he once repeated the story, told him by Soloviov, of how he, Soloviov, once drank champagne, seated at the base of a pyramid. " What sacrilege! " Rozanov said in agitation. " A pyramid, ancient wisdom, beauty, religion—everything is there!—and he in his top-hat gulping down champagne! Think now, how could I help abusing him! "

Of Tchekhov Rozanov once said: " Tchekhov?—nothing particular in him. He looked at life, and what he saw he wrote down. A very fine writer, people got to like him, and began reading him. But he is a cold one, and there's nothing particular in him. I understand his success, but don't enjoy it."

Certain ideas held in common created a bond between Rozanov and A. L. Volynsky, the critic and philosopher. But in their ways of thinking, in their very minds they were always strangers to one another. " You are too logical," Rozanov would say to Volynsky, " you polish your ideas too finely. And besides, you have a Roman nose, and we Russians love a potato-shaped nose. It's that Roman nose of yours that stands in the way of our friendship." He called Volynsky " a Jew of the Greek Orthodox faith "; he valued his interest in Orthodoxy, in the personality of Christ, in the destinies of the Russian Church, etc. Especially dear to

ROZANOV

Rozanov was Volynsky's campaign against the radical and socialist literary critics. Once Volynsky and Rozanov happened to be present at a performance by Isidora Duncan at the Maly Theatre in Petersburg. Suddenly Rozanov ran from his box to the stalls where Volynsky sat, and embracing him, said: " I suddenly remembered your great exploits against the critics and I came running here to give you a kiss."

He avoided talking of the Merezhkovskies. Only once he said with terror about Mme. Merezhkovsky (Hippius): " I say, she is not a woman, but the real devil—both in her mind and in all the rest. . . . Don't let us talk about her." . . .

During the years I used to go to Rozanov's house (1915-1917) the members of the Religious Philosophic Society no longer came to his Sundays. Many writers ceased their acquaintance with Rozanov on so-called " moral " grounds, which, however, had nothing in common with real morality. Of the writing fraternity there still at times used to come to see him: A. Remizov, K. Choukovsky, M. Kuzmin, N. Lerner, A. Izmailov, and a few men from the " Conservative camp." . . .

Rozanov was magnificent in polemics. It was not " argument " (for how could you argue with Rozanov?), but a mental tournament, wrestling. I remember one Sunday at-home, when Rozanov was in particularly high spirits. It was a mixed company: many lady " admirers," a painter from the Crimea, Professor Souslov, Tigranov, and many

others. The conversation was lively, all the " heat " coming from Rozanov, who was pouring out a stream of ideas, images, mimicry, gestures. At moments he went so far as to lose all sense of " decency." " What? An autonomous Ukraine? " he shouted at a girl, who devoutly gazed into his face. " Here, take your autonomy! " and he made an obscene gesture. . . . If in the process of his idea he had to touch on very intimate matters he spoke with perfect freedom, without any restraint. Once he even said that when he was at work, " for the sake of inspiration " he used to touch with his left hand " the source of all inspiration " (" I then write better ").

It is typical of Rozanov that in discussing literary or public men he was above all interested in the personality, in the " physiognomy " of the man. " What does he look like? " Rozanov would inquire. " Is he married? Has he any children? Is he well-off, or poor? " The physiognomy of a person was to him the paramount thing, and from this he arrived at conclusions as to the rest of the man. Many of the " left " were physiologically antipathetic to him, and consequently " their works deserved no attention." In a man he above all loved and respected the man, and only afterwards his " complexion " and the " various other things."

The problem of sex (in its religious-philosophic aspect) was Rozanov's favourite theme of conversation. But he preferred to talk on that theme in private, and not in company. " You know, as a rule," he used to say, dropping his voice and almost

shrinking, " one has to speak about these things in *a whisper*, yes, in a *whisper*, as one speaks of what is most mysterious and sacred. . . . And we, impudent fellows that we are, shout it all out and write books about it." . . .

His preoccupation with the problem of sex was regarded by his wife and daughters without any sympathy at all. Once he began speaking rapturously of a new article on sex which he had just published. " What you have written is filthy and nothing else," exclaimed one of his daughters with a grimace. Rozanov shook with noiseless laughter and said: " She will go on like that for another five years, repeating ' filthy, filthy '; then she will understand and, oh, how well she will understand." . . .

His daughters aften argued with him, and one of them used now and then to have recourse to hysterics, as the most irrefutable argument. His wife simply used to fall asleep during such conversations, either because of weak health or perhaps from sheer boredom: she evidently was outside the sphere of Rozanov's ideas. But he valued her very much, considered her a " moral genius," and took very great care of her. At times he was brusque with her. Once he answered some question of hers rather rudely. But when she left the room, he suddenly got alarmed: " I say, I believe I have hurt mother—I'll go and ask her forgiveness " And with his shuffling, quick walk he went to the next room. He whispered there for a while, and returned with a radiant face: " it is all right now."

Whereas Rozanov's literary sympathies and antipathies were distinct and unequivocal, his social and political tastes were very difficult to make out. After the revolution of 1905," when the officials retired," he began abusing the authorities. When, with the suppression of the revolution, the " officials returned," he began criticizing their opponents. Now he was in raptures over the revolution, now in ecstasies over the monarchy. Very curious in Rozanov was his combination of psychological love for the Jews with political anti-semitism. Sympathizing instinctively with Jews, he at the same time advocated pogroms against them for " the Christian boy tortured by the Jew Bailis." In the same breath he cursed and blessed the Jews. Not long before his death he repented, and requested that all his books containing attacks on the Jews should be burnt; and he wrote penitent letters to the Jewish nation. Yet these letters are puzzling: there are in them " compunctions of conscience," tenderness along with derision. This, however, is beyond a doubt, that Rozanov's anti-semitism and the anti-semitism of the *Novoye Vremya* were utterly different. On the whole, Rozanov found himself in the " conservative camp " quite accidentally: he did not try to " accommodate " himself there, but was just " thrown up " on the right bank. " I am a writer, not a journalist," Rozanov said more than once. " My business is to write, and I am quite indifferent as to who publishes my articles."

I remember his ecstasy in 1917 after the February

Revolution. He was agitated, excited, and yet enraptured by the events, saying that all would be well, that "now Russia would reveal herself," etc. "I shall develop the ideology of the Revolution," he said in one letter, "and give it such a justification as the Revolution itself never dreamt of."

That ecstasy did not last long. Soon came dire poverty. More than once he had to humble himself to get a mere piece of bread. He, who ceaselessly worked all his life long, had to pick up cigarette ends outside public houses and at the railway stations, and of a dozen ends thus collected he would make one cigarette. "Out of charity" some bookseller would let him have a cup of tea.

And yet his thought was bubbling over, he wanted to live, he felt a keen interest in people. As a man, owing to hunger and cold, he "gave in." But as a writer he did not give in, and did not try to "adapt" himself. Rozanov's flight to Sergiev Posad in 1918 was explained by many as a cowardly desire on his part to disappear from the horizon. This is partly true. Rozanov experienced a state of desperate panic. "The time has come when one has to pack up quickly and fly," he said. But he was not a coward. . . . In the autumn of 1918, walking with S. N. Dourylin in Moscow, he spoke in a loud voice, addressing himself to the passers-by: "Do show me, please, a real live Bolshevik, I should very much like to see one." As they entered the Moscow Soviet, he said: "Show me the head of the Bolsheviks—Lenin or Trotsky. I'm awfully interested. I am Rozanov,

the monarchist," Dourylin, put out by Rozanov's inadvertent frankness, begged him to keep silent, but he did not succeed.

* * *

I believe Rozanov never wrote more inspiring, fiery letters than those he wrote during the last few months of his life. . . . These letters breathe an indefinable tenderness and are saturated with the bitter poison of poverty, hunger, dire want, and exhaustion.

His last days were a continuous Hosanna to Christ. Bodily pain could not suppress his spiritual joy, his glorious transfiguration.

" Embrace one another," he said, " let us embrace one another in the name of the Risen Christ. Christ has arisen! What joy, what delight! Indeed miracles are happening to me, and what these miracles are I will tell you some time, later." . . .

Before his death his pains ceased. At his own request he received the last sacrament four times, Extreme Unction once, and three times the prayers for the dying were read over him. During the last prayer he passed away, without pain, quietly and peacefully, on 23rd January, old style, 1919.

Rozanov, who fought against Christ, who rejected His teaching, which seemed to him to reduce to ashes the flowers of life and to drive away the joys of life, died in a splendid contradiction with himself. . . .

SOLITARIA

A NOTE TO *SOLITARIA*

On the last page of *Solitaria*, after the *corrigenda* in the original, we find the following P.S.S. by Rozanov. (In the first edition of the book.)

P.S. "*Examining my Coins.*" The identification, classification, and description of ancient coins demand great attention from the eye, examination (through a magnifying glass), and the labour of *remembering* and *recollecting* (analogous coins and figures). But it leaves free the imagination, thought, also anger or tenderness. Then, putting the coin and the magnifying glass aside, I used to put down what had passed in the soul, "just that moment", those "twenty minutes." . . .

P.P.S. "*On the back of the lined sheet*", that is, when writing an article. But during the writing, another idea would come to me, an idea which had nothing to do with the article. Then, quickly removing the lined sheet, I wrote down on the back of it that other idea.

P.P.P.S. "Fame", "popularity" and such-like terms are meant in the sense of being widely known in Russia, popular in Russia owing to my collaboration in a paper of wide circulation. (In Piatigorsk the keeper of the Lermontov house "knew me"; he was an ancient half-alive petty official in retirement. Is he still alive ?).

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO *SOLITARIA*

THE wind blows at midnight and carries away leaves. . . . So also life in fleeting time tears off from our soul exclamations, sighs, half-thoughts, half-feelings. . . . Which, being fragments of sound, have the significance that they "come" straight from the soul, without elaboration, without purpose, without premeditation—without anything external. Simply, "the soul is alive," that is, "has lived," "has breathed." . . . I have always somehow liked these "sudden exclamations." Strictly speaking, they flow in one continuously, but one can't succeed (there's no paper at hand) in putting them down—and they die. Afterwards one can't remember them for anything. Yet certain things I succeeded in jotting down on paper. The jottings went on piling up. And then I decided to gather together those fallen leaves.

What for? Who needs it?

Merely I myself. Ah, dear reader, I have long been writing "without a reader," merely because I like it so. So "without a reader" I am publishing. . . . It just pleases me to do so. And I shall neither cry, nor be angry, if the reader, having by mistake bought a copy of the book, throws it away into the wastepaper basket. (It is more profitable, without cutting the pages, but just glancing through the book,

and unfolding the sheets, to sell it to a secondhand bookshop at a 50 per cent. reduction.)

Well, reader, I do not stand on ceremony with you, so you need not stand on ceremony with me.

" To the devil! ". . .

" To the devil! ". . .

And *au revoir* until our meeting in the next world. With a reader it is much more tedious, than with oneself. He opens his mouth wide and waits for what is going to be put into it. In which case he has the look of an ass before braying. Not a very engaging sight. . . . What the dickens do I need him for? . . . I write for " unknown friends " and perhaps even for no one. . . .

SOLITARIA

WHEN the decadents used to come to my house, I would let them out, the sterile ones, after midnight, but would detain the last one, the kind Victor Proteikinsky (a teacher with fantasies), and point to a place behind the door.

Man has two feet; but if, say, five persons leave their goloshes in the hall, it seems an awful lot. Behind the door stood a multitude of little goloshes so that I myself used to be surprised. To count them quickly was impossible. And both I and Proteikinsky would burst out laughing:

"What a lot!"

"What a lot!"

I always thought with pride: "*Civis Romanus sum.*" There sit down to my table ten persons, including the servants. And all are fed by my labour. All of them find *a place in the world* round my labour. And by no means is Hertzen *a civis Rossicus*, but "Rozanov."

Hertzen was only having "a pleasant time." . . .

* * *

In respect of Proteikinsky I feel a deep and long-standing sense of guilt. He behaved irreproachably towards me, but I once said of him—although out of sheer fatigue—a rude and mocking thing. And that only because "he never can finish a speech" (his way of talking), and I was tired and could not listen to his speech to the end. . . . And the rude word I said behind his back, when he went out of the door.

* * *

Our ideas come we know not whence and go we know not where.

The first: however you may sit down *to write* a certain thing, you sit down and write an *altogether different* thing.

Between "I want to sit down" and "I sat down" —there passes a minute. Whence then come those thoughts, on a new *theme*, which are altogether different from those with which I paced the room, and even sat down in order to write *just them* down. . . .

* * *

With his posteriors on a pile of proofs and MSS. and "letters to the Editor," M. fell asleep.

> And he dreams of the valley of Daguestan:
> There he lies with a bullet in his heart.

Our editor's sleep is less gloomy: he dreams of the legs of the beautiful actress V., who to all his coaxings responds:

> But I belong to another,
> And shall for ever be faithful to him.

And the problem, in his dream, is about how to overcome "Tatyana's faithfulness," granted which, what is to become of editors, airmen, sailors, and other men who can't afford to waste time. . . .

* * *

I open the door into another room. . . . Luxuriously furnished. It is the General's [Souvorin's]. In a chair, covered with wonderful leather, of a dark colour, sits Borya [Souvorin's son]. He sits in his shirt sleeves, with vest and tie. Perspiration rolling down his face. . . . He remembers how Varya Panin sang and how his Annoushka danced. A long galley proof lies before him.

"What is it you are reading, Borya?"

"Letters from the provinces."

"Why do you hesitate over them? 'Pass' them all in one go."

"I can't. There's no space."

"Then send it all to the devil." . . .

"I can't do that either. The readers will be cross." It is a hard job, that of an editor. Who am I to go with then?

(*At our office.*)

* * *

It is as though that damned Gutenberg has licked all writers with his copper tongue, and all of them have lost their souls in print, they have lost their face, character. My "I" is only in manuscript, as is the "I" of every writer. This must be the reason why I have a superstitious fear of tearing up letters, notebooks (even my children's exercise books), manuscripts—and I don't tear up anything. I have kept intact all the letters from my school friends; with regret, as the pile ever grows bigger and bigger, I tear up only mine, and that only rarely.

(*In a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Newspapers, I think, will pass away just as the "eternal" wars of the Middle Ages, as women's "tournures," etc. They are still kept up by "universal education," which is even going to become "compulsory." A fellow with a "compulsory education" is certainly interested to read something "about Spain." It will begin, I think, with *disaccustoming* oneself to newspapers. Then people will begin to regard reading papers as simply indecent, cowardly ("*parva anima*").

"What do you live by?" "Well, by what the

Voice of Truth declares" (they have invented such a title!), "or *The Final Truth*" (they'll invent such a title to-morrow). He who hears that reply will smile, and those *smiles* will gradually see them to the grave.

If people must read newspapers, then let them read the *Kolokol* [The Bell], as Vasili Mikhailovich, imitating Hertzen, contrived to call his paper.

Vasili Mikhailovich is picturesque in every way. At his house, I hear, there is a standing order that if the children, coming from school, ask "Where is papa?" the servants must not say: "The master is not at home," but "the General is not at home." If I remember this on the day of judgment, I shall laugh, I assure you.

I always somehow liked Vasili Mikhailovich. I intervened on his behalf with Tolstoy. And the amazing thing is: he is simple, *simple with everybody*, not fussy, not proud, and generally has "Christian virtues."

One problem remains unsolved, *i.e.*, in his head: What earthly rank do angels hold? For he cannot imagine a single creature without some rank. It is like Pythagoras' "there is nothing *without its number*." And with Vasili Mikhailovich—"without its rank," *without a grade in some hierarchy.*

Note this: "General" gives him so much disinterested pleasure. Russia it costs nothing. For V.M.'s sake alone I should not permit the abolition of titles. To whom do they do any harm? There are plenty of "civilians," and indeed, no one is forbidden to bear a "barrister's badge." Why is not the latter a "title" or "order"? "It has been earned and gives a social standing." Allow then V.M. to have the one which he so much desires. What despotism!

People think at times that V.M. is an "arrivist."

Not in the least. He loves his rank, office, and service as being *inseparable from his soul*. Of him a certain wise man said that "in thinking *what is a Russian*, one has always to take into consideration *also* V.M." *I.e.*, a Russian is certainly not only "Skvorzov," but *among other things* he is *also* "Skvorzov."

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

"The end crowns the work". . . shows its *power*. Lord, shall I speak to the end: "and also shows its *truth*"? What then has become of the "Russian Reformation"? ?!! One has bought a yacht, another has gone into numismatics, a third is wandering about in foreign lands. . . . The Bishops have hurried away to their places of service and it is said that in place of the former "Benediction," they have recourse to the latest circular of the Ministry of the Interior. Lord, what does all this mean? Others still have gone in for sectarianism, but keep on surreptitiously sending articles to the *Novoye Vremya*, without differing from that paper on the acute question of *Church v. Literature* (on occasion of Tolstoy's death). What does it all mean? What does it mean?

Are they to be punished?

Or shall we say with Turgenev: "Thus ends everything Russian." . . .

(*Examining my coins*, 1910.)

* * *

You look at a Russian with a sharp little eye. . .
He looks at you with a sharp little eye. . . .
And everything is understood.
And no words are needed.
That's just what is impossible with *a foreigner*.

(*In the street.*)

* * *

Our literature began with satire (Kantemir), and then the whole of the eighteenth century was fairly satirical.

The middle of the nineteenth century was sentimental.

And then, from the 'sixties, satire reigned again supreme.

But never was it so predominant as in the eighteenth century.

Novikov, Radischev, Fonvizin, and, half a century later, Schedrin and Nekrasov had such a success, as even Pushkin had never enjoyed. During my school years Pushkin was not even mentioned, let alone read. But Nekrassov was read to the verge of craziness, every line of his was familiar, every verse was caught up. I had an unaccountable taste for not reading Schedrin, and up till now I haven't read a single " thing " of his. *Provincial Sketches* I haven't even seen. Of his *History of a City* I read the first three pages and gave it up in disgust. My brother Kolya (a teacher of history in a public school, a man of *positive ideals*) was always reading Schedrin, and loved to read him aloud to his wife. And, in passing, I heard: " Gloomov said " . . . " Balalaikin answered," hence I know that those are characters from Schedrin. But I was never interested to hear what Gloomov said, nor to see it for myself. I think that thereby I spared my soul a great deal.

That abusive Vice-Governor is a loathsome phenomenon. And it needed the sheer tastelessness of our public to endure him.

I'll allow myself to be a bit inquisitorial. Indeed, *young* Schedrin did not choose to be a clerk, a magistrate, a teacher, but like Chichikov[1] or Solakevich[1]) " he chose a stool which doesn't tumble down,"

[1] Characters from *Gogol*.

that is, a post at the Ministry of the Interior. And he kept on being promoted till he became a Vice-Governor—not a paltry job. Then "he had a difference with the authorities," "interceded on behalf of the Old Believers" or "defended the young students," and was given the sack.

He became a famous writer. Loris Melikov himself sought his friendship, and as to Governors—they were "mere nobodies" to him.

How different from the fate of Dostoevsky!

(Examining my coins.)

* * *

With a little beard, with a tender, girlish face, A.P.U. was arranging his cassock, fingering it here and there.

"Do you want any pins? What are you doing?"

"No, I took some with me from home. I'm fastening on my medal with the portrait of Alexander III so as to go to the Metropolitan Bishop. Here's also my order."

At last he's ready: with the cross and the portrait of the Tsar. He stands, smiles, just like a girl.

How I love him, and I do love him unceasingly, this wisest priest of our time—with his word firm as iron, with his thought direct and clear. It is he who ought to compose the "catechism."

And how many centuries old he is—he's all "ours," a "Russian priest."

And in addition to this he comes from a prophetical family, and is all apocalyptical. A perfectly wonderful phenomenon.

I desire that after my death his letters to me (which I preserve to the very last one) should be published. Then will people see what a righteous and honour-

able man he was. I thank God for having given me this friendship with him.

(*Examining my coins. On A. P. Ustinsky.*)

* * *

I took a cab to the editorial office. I was in a good mood.

" How much? "

" Thirty-five copecks."

" Thirty will do."

I seated myself and, nudging the driver's back, said:

" How could you ask such a capital? "

He drives and laughs all the while, shaking his head. He's a boy about eighteen. He turns his head to me, his face all in smiles.

" How is it, sir, that you say I asked a ' capital ' ? Thirty-five copecks—a capital ? ! "

He shakes his head and can't forget it.

" You are still young, but I have done a good deal of work. Thirty-five copecks is a large capital if you yourself have to make it. Some have to work hard all day long to earn thirty-five copecks."

" Yes, just so," he became grave, and flicked his whip. Phew!

His horse ran on.

(*In the street.*)

* * *

Nina Rudnev (a relation), a girl of seventeen, said in reply to the *masculine*, *manly*, *strong* in me:

" The only *masculine* thing in you . . . are your trousers."

She cut her words short. . . .

I.e., apart from the clothes, is it all *feminine*? I never was liked by women (except by " my Friend "), and this gives the explanation of women's antipathy to me

which always (from my school days) worried me so much.

* * *

Live every day as though you had lived all your life just for this day.

(*In the doorway, coming home.*)

* * *

The secret of authorship consists in the constant and involuntary music in the soul. If it is not there, a man can only " make a writer of himself." But he is not a writer.

Something is flowing in the soul. Eternally, constantly. What? Why? Who knows?—least of all the writer.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

Lines like these two of Nekrasov's

> Driving at night through the dark street,—
> Oh, my lonely friend! . . .

have not yet been surpassed in the whole of Russian literature. Tolstoy, who said of him that " he was not *at all* a poet," manifested not only little " Christian meekness," but did not even manifest the impartiality of a mere magistrate. Verses like:

> Uncle James' house is not a little cart

smack more of the people than all the books Tolstoy has written. And altogether Nekrasov has quite ten pages of verse more truly national, than any of our poets and prose writers have ever succeeded in producing. These approximately two tenths of his poems are an *eternal deposit* on our literature and *they will never die*.

Certainly his importance was extremely exaggerated (" above Pushkin "). But in his case, too, a *nota-bene* should be added: he was " the moulder of thought " for a generation extraordinarily active, energetic, and pure-hearted. Not the worst of Russian generations, and this is a historical fact— which no malice can brush away and no blindness can ignore. " Catilina may be bad or good, but mentioned he shall be," and every Ilovaisky [a compiler of historical text-books for schools] will mention him, while Ilovaisky will not be mentioned by anyone. That is one thing. But then there are the two tenths of his poems: they are of the people, genuine, natural, *powerful*. " The Muse of Vengeance and Sorrow "[1] is strong after all; and where there is strength, passion, there also is poetry. Not even a madman could deny the poetry of his *Vlas*. His *Gardener*, *Driver*, *Forgotten Village* are charming, wonderful, and were quite new *in tone* in Russian literature. Nekrasov, generally, has created a *new tone* of verse, a *new tone of feeling*, a new tone and timbre of *speech*. And there is a surprising amount of the Great-Russian, even of the Yaroslavian, in him: such a *speech*—somewhat cunning and impudent, blinking and elusive—is *certainly* not spoken either in the Penza or the Ryazan province, but only in the Volga harbours and bazaars. And this local trait he has introduced into literature, into prosody, having made in this too a tremendous and bold new departure, for a time, *for one generation* having fascinated and carried away every one.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

[1] This is how Nekrasov's talent has generally been described.

The pain of life is much more powerful than the interest in life. That's why religion will always conquer philosophy.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

They say fame is " desirable." Perhaps—in youth. But in old age and even in middle age there is nothing more disgusting and intolerable than fame. Not " more wearisome," but just more sickening.

Napoleon, who " loved fame," surely died almost young.

How I admire Pobedonoszev, who, when he was told: " this will arouse unfavourable comments in society," stopped, and did not spit even, but somehow dropped the spittle on the floor, rubbed it, and without saying a word, turned away. (Father Petrov's indignant story of him.)

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

In the idea of prostitution—" the fight against which is hopeless "—enters incontestably " I belong to all," *i.e.*, that which also enters in the idea of a *writer*, *orator*, *advocate*, *official* in the service of the State. Thus, on one hand, prostitution is the most social of phenomena, to a certain extent the prototype of *sociality*—and it may even be said that *rei publicae natae sunt ex feminis publicis*, " the first states were born of the instinct of women towards prostitution." . . . At any rate it is not worse than " Rome grew great through its vicinity to the river Tiber " (Mommsen), or " Moscow grew great owing to the geographical peculiarities of the river Moskva." And, on the other hand, there *indeed* enters into the essence of an actor, writer, advocate, even of a

" Father who officiates for everybody "—the psychology of the prostitute, *i.e.*, the indifference to " all " and the kindness to " all." " Funeral or Wedding? " asks the priest of a caller, with an equally smooth, vague smile, ready to pass to " congratulation " or to " condolence." A scholar in so far as *he is published*, a writer inasmuch as he *is printed*, are certainly prostitutes. Professors are most certainly only *prostitués pêcheurs*. Hence does it not follow that " prostitution is indispensable," like the State, the Press, etc., etc. And, on the other hand, does it not follow: " they should be forgiven " and " they should be left alone." Prostitution, evidently " so understandable," cannot indeed be grasped by the mind by reason of the extent of its motives and essence. That it is more *deep-rooted* and more *metaphysical* than, for instance, " professorship-in-ordinary " need not even be discussed. " Professorship " is a mere sparrow . . . whilst prostitution, damn it, is perhaps like the mysterious bird Gamayun. . . .

Essentially, " *the most intimate I give to all* "—is a notion utterly metaphysical. . . . Damn it all; it could make you murder out of sheer indignation, or make you . . . ponder over it without end. " As you like it," to quote the title of Shakespeare's play.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

Tiptoeing, and with a happy face, Schwarz or Schmidt used to come up to us and tell us in his German accent:

" There are brains to-day."

This as a change from the eternal " goose's wing," *i.e.*, a bone, with a tightly drawn rough skin, which we used to gnaw

Without adoration, without inspiration. . . .

And we used to laugh with Konstantin (Voznesensky) at those "brains." The proprietor of the eating-house was glad to treat us to something "elegant."

To the German it was a delight, but to us a grief. Well, we used to eat the brains. But once at his place I was nearly poisoned by a piece of meat (in the soup), evidently rotten. No sooner had I swallowed it than something extraordinary happened: as though I had eaten a toad. And for a whole day, for almost two days, I was sick.

(*When I was at the University.*)

* * *

What a false, pretentious life R.'s is; what a false, lying, unbearable personality his is. And yet he's a genius. I don't speak of the pain; but how unbearable, physically even, to see this combination of genius and monstrosity.

Does it worry him? I did not notice. He seems always happy. But how painfully must he feel it in his soul.

With him is that fat, pretty woman who swallowed him, as the whale swallowed Jonah; she's ambitious, fond of power, and at the same time rapturously sugary. Both of them are absorbed in democracy, and dream only of receiving an order from the Court. More exactly, their democratic views spring from the fact that they do not receive orders from the Court. (A few lines in her *Memoirs*.)

And yet he is a genius beyond comparison with others who lived before him, or with his contemporaries.

How sad and terrible this is. Surely, there are a

great many things I don't understand; but this seems to me *terrible*. "A peep into hell."

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

Giving birth to a blade of grass is more difficult than demolishing a stone building.

During the many years of my literary activity I have observed, seen, noticed from my memoranda (dealing with my publications), also from Press notices, that no sooner had I written something funny, spiteful, destructive, murderous, than everyone eagerly rushed after the book or the article. . . . But with whatever love, from whatever pure a heart, I wrote a book with a *positive content*, it lay dead, and no one gave himself even the trouble to glance at the article, to cut the brochure, to open the book.

In one case: "I don't want to. I'm bored, sick of it."

"But what are you sick of? You haven't read it?"

"Never mind, I'm sick of it. I know beforehand."...

In the other case: "Let us run. Catch him. Thank you!" . . .

"But what are you 'thanking' me for? Surely it *came down* and has crushed someone, or it will *come down* and crush someone!"

"Never mind. . . . It's lively. It's more amusing."

People love a fire. They love a circus. Shooting. Even when someone is *drowning* people really love to look on: they come running.

That is where the whole point is.

And literature has become disgusting to me.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

Certainly not to make use of such a boiling energy as Chernyshevsky's, for the good of the State, was a

crime, bordering on murder. To Chernyshevsky I always applied different criteria: he was not *a thinker*, *a writer* . . . not even a *politician*. In all these respects he stands for nothing *particular*, and at times he even stands for something ridiculous and pretentious. But the point is not that, but this: that never since Peter the Great have we come across such a figure, whose every hour is *breathing*, whose every minute *is alive*, and whose every step is tinged with "solicitude for the country." All his "foreign books" were nonsense; his emendation of J. S. Mill's *Political Economy* is the bungling of a seminarist. All this tosh might have been and should have been forgiven him; and use should have been made not of his *head*, but of his *wings* and *legs*, which were perfectly wonderful, beyond comparison with anyone else's; or, to be more exact, only the boiling, nonstop Peter possessed such "legs." It is inconceivable how our flabby, lifeless state-mechanism, which knows not *where* to find the *energies* and *workers*, did not avail itself of that "steam engine," or rather that "electric motor." What are all the Aksakovs, Samarin and Khomyakov, or the "famous" Mordvinov, compared with him as *a worker*, *i.e.*, a potential worker, who was buried alive in the snows of Viliyusk? But here we must upbraid him too: why did not he, feeling such a *store of energy in his breast*, for the purpose of *breaking through to work*, kiss the hands of all the generals and, for the matter of that, "kiss everyone's shoulder," provided they let him help the people, let him come close to the people, gave him a "department." Ignoring completely his Communist and Social-Democratic ideas, permitting him *personally* to live with half a hundred student girls and even to choke himself with Mme. Zebrikov—yet as a *character* and as an *energy* I would have placed him

not only at the head of a ministry, but at the head of a cabinet of ministers, having given him the rôle of Speransky and the "immunity" of Arakcheyev.... Such characters are born one in an age: and to throw him into the snow and wilderness, into the marshes and forests . . . damn it . . . it is the devil knows what. Reading his *style* (I read his Lessing; his beginning) you must feel: he will never get tired, he will never stop still; of ideas there is only a handful, but of promise there is a whole sheaf of lightnings. Indeed, there are Peruns, gods of thunder, in his soul. Now (after the publication of the correspondence with his wife and his relations to Doborbyubov) it is all explained: he was an intellectual, spiritual "S"; well, such eagles don't droop their wings, but go on flying, until killed, until death or victory. I don't know his experiences, but this is of *no importance*. In the main, as a State worker (a *social* and State worker) he is above Speransky, above anyone of "Katherine's eagles," above the braggart Pestel, and the absurd Bakunin, and the ambitious Hertzen. He was indeed *unique*. The absurd situation of complete practical impotence threw him into literature, journalism, philosophizing, even into fiction: where, *having no vocation at all* (quietude, contemplation), he smashed all the chairs, knocked down all the tables, soiled all the comfortable living rooms and, generally, committed "nihilism"—and could achieve nothing else.... He is a Disraeli, who was not allowed to go further than being a "novelist"; or a Bismarck, who, for his duels with students, was condemned to spend all his life "fighting duels with swords" and "forbidden to do any other work." Damn it: it is destiny, fate, and not so much *his* as *Russia's*.

But *he* too: why couldn't he have given up his

nihilism and his " seminarism." For the sake of the people. For the sake of the peasants, the horseless, cowless peasants. . . .

It is astonishing: indeed, it is the straight road to Tsusima. More astonishing still: had he entered into practical life, we should not have had *theoretical nihilism*. In this truly remarkable life-story we reached the Tree of Life: but—we just cut it down. We cut it down " in order to make clogs " for the lazy Oblomovs.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

The secret of her sufferings is in this that with her amazing intellectual brilliance, she, however, had only half-talents in everything. Neither a painter, nor scholar, nor singer, although *also* a singer, *also* a painter, *also* (mainly and most easily) a scholar (the years of study, mastering languages). And she faded away, faded irretrievably.

(*Examining my coins. On Marie Bashkirtsev.*)

* * *

Surprisingly disgusting to me is my name. Always with such a strange feeling I sign my articles " V. Rozanov." Would it were " Rudnev," " Bugayev," anything. Or the common Russian " Ivanov." Once I walked in the street. I raised my head and read:

" Rozanov, German Bakers."

Why, so it must be: all bakers are " Rozanovs," and therefore all " Rozanovs " are bakers. What else could such fools (with such a stupid name) do? Worse than my name is only that of (professor) Kablukov: that is utterly disgraceful. Or Stetchkin

(the critic of the *Russky Vestnik*): that is sheer infamy. But it is awfully unpleasant to bear such a name as mine. I think Bryussov (the poet) is always delighted with his name. Therefore,

"THE WORKS OF V. ROZANOV"

don't tempt me. It is even ridiculous.

"POEMS BY V. ROZANOV"

can't possibly be thought of. Who will "read" such poems?

"What do you do, Rozanov?"

"I write poems."

"Fool. You'd better bake bread!"

Quite natural.

This unnaturally disgusting name is mine in addition to a miserable appearance. What a lot of times, as a schoolboy (when the boys went home) I stood before the large mirror in the school hall and "what a lot of tears I stealthily shed." A red face. An unpleasant complexion, shiny (not dry). The hair simply of fiery colour (and that in a school boy!), and it stands erect, but not in the noble, "hedgehog" fashion (a manly style), but in a rising wave, perfectly absurdly, I never saw anything like it. I would grease it, but it would not lie down. Then I would come home—and again look in the glass (a small, handy one): "Well, who could like such an ugly face?" I used to be seized with horror. Yet I was *remarkably* loved *by my chums*, and I always was the "ringleader" (against the authorities, teachers, particularly against the head master). In the glass, looking for beauty "with my protruding eyes," I naturally did not see my "expression," "smile," generally the *life of the face*; and I think

that that very part in me was alive and after all made me remarkably loved by many (as I always absolutely loved in return).

But in my heart I thought:

" No, that's settled. Women *will never love me, not a single one.* What remains then? *To retire into myself, to live with myself, for myself* (not egotistically, but spiritually), *for the future.* Certainly, in a roundabout and " foolish " way, my external unattractiveness was the cause of my self-fathoming."

Now I am even pleased that " Rozanov " is so disgusting. And I may add that from my childhood I loved ragged, worn, well-worn clothes. New clothes always squeezed me, embarrassed me, were even unbearable. And, in a word, as in the case of wine, the older the better. . . . The same I thought of boots, hats, and of " what takes the place of a jacket." And now it has all begun to please me.

Simply, I have no sense of form (Aristotle's *causa formalis*). I am a " clod," a " loofah." But that is because I am all spirit, and all subject: the subjective in me is indeed developed in me to an extent which I don't find and don't imagine in anyone else. " Well then? " . . . I am the least " born man," as though I still lay (as a clod) in my mother's womb (I love her endlessly, I mean my dead mother) and heard " paradisical melodies " (I always seem to be hearing music)—my peculiarity. " Well then, splendid, excellent! " . . . Why the deuce do I need an " attractive face " or " new clothes," when *I myself* (in myself, as the " clod ") am infinitely attractive; and in my soul—I am infinitely old, experienced, as though I were a thousand years old, and along with this I am young as a young baby. . . . Right! Righto! . . .

(*Examining my coins*)

Azure Love.

. . . And each time I ascended the hill and approached that large stone house I heard music. Much later I learnt that it was "scales." They seemed to me magical. Slowly, thoughtfully I walked up the terribly solemn drive, entered the enormous hall-vestibule, and, taking off my school overcoat, I always passed through to see my chum.

My chum did not know that I was in love with his sister. I saw her once—at tea, and once—in the drive up to the Hall of the Nobility (there was a symphony concert there). At tea she spoke French with her mother; I blushed terribly and my chum and I talked in a whisper.

After this tea used to be sent in to his room. But through the wall, not a very thick one, I at times heard her silvery voice—about the tea or something. . . .

And in the drive up to the Hall of the Nobility it was like this: I missed the concert, or something happened. . . . It does not matter. I stood near the drive through which continuously people, many people, drove up, in a stream. And behold, she and her mother—an unpleasant, pompous old lady—got out of a sledge. Besides the pale thin face, the extraordinarily elegant figure, the wonderful outline of the ears, of the straight small nose, so very refined, my heart "took" in also this that she always held her head a little bent down—which, together with the contour of the breast and the back, formed a fascinating line to me. "A gazelle drinking." . . . I believe the chief fascination consisted in her movements, magically light. . . . And yet the supreme, the final fascination to me was in her soul.

And yet what sort of notion could I have of her?

But I imagined that soul to be proud—and all her

movements confirmed my idea. Not haughty: but she was so absorbed in her inner charm that she did not notice people. . . . She only passed by people, things, took what she needed from them, but had no other connection with them. When alone she must be sitting down to her music. I knew that she took lessons in mathematics from the local public-school teacher—higher mathematics, for she had completed her high-school course. "There are such lucky fellows!" (the teacher).

Once my chum committed some offence; he forged the marks in his school report; and with absurd *naïveté* telling me about it, he let fall:

"My sister said to mother: 'I ascribe it all to the fact that Volodya is a friend of that Rozanov. . . . That friendship has a bad influence on him. Volodya was not always like that.'" . . .

Volodya was a silly, nice little boy—somewhat "irresponsible." I wrote compositions for him in class, and after that we "chatted." . . . But I had no "bad influence" on him, for owing to his childishness, *naïveté*, and nonsensicalness, it was impossible to have any "influence" on him.

I listened in silence. . . .

But how I longed then to be dead.

And not "then" only: it seemed to me all the while—always—that "I was being run over by horses in the street." And she drives by. The horses are stopped. And seeing that it is "me," she says to her mother:

"Poor boy. . . . Perhaps he was not as bad as he seemed. He's probably *hurt*. After all I am so sorry for him."

* * *

One may both fall in love with terrorism and get to hate it to the very bottom of one's soul, without

any insincerity at all. There are matters, *per se* dialectical, radiating (themselves) now one, now another light, seeming on one side one colour, and on the other side a different colour. We, people, are terribly unfortunate in our judgments in face of these dialectical matters, for we are terribly helpless. "God has taken the ends of things and tied them into a knot, not to be untied." You can't disentangle them, and if you cut them—everything will die. And one has just to say—"blue, white, red." For all these *are* there. No one will condemn Morosov's "Letters from the Schlisselburg Fortress" (in the *Vestnik Europa*), but his *Thunder in the Storm* is absurd and *pretentious*. Hessya Helfman is fine—but that bloodthirsty woman Frumkin is organically revolting to me, just as Berdiagin who, *out of spite*, pricked himself to death with a table fork. They are all consumptive Hippolits (from Dostoevsky's *Idiot*) with consumption in their nerves. No harmony of soul, no grandeur, no spiritual "decorum," as the old fellow in *The Adolescent* calls it.

(*Examining my coins*, 1909.)

* * *

Terrible as the confession is, all our "splendid" literature is, essentially, awfully insufficient and not deep. It depicts "superbly"; but that which it depicts is by no means superb and is hardly worth this masterly embossing.

The eighteenth century—is all "assisting the government": satires, odes—everything. Fonvisin, Kantemir, Sumarokov, Lomonosov—everything and *everybody*.

The nineteenth century, in its golden phase, reflected the life of the landlords:

Tatyana's lovely family,
Tatyana's lovely ideal . . .

Well, good. . . . Still what is there of the *universal*? Of what *good* is it to a Roman, German, Englishman? Strictly speaking, *except to the Russians themselves*, it is of no interest at all.

What came after that and especially now? All these palpitations of Belinsky and Hertzen? Ogariov and the rest? Bakunin? Gleb Uspensky and we? Mikhailovsky? Apart from Tolstoy (who *as an exception to this rule* is great) all this is derived from the students' "smoking room" (a room in which there is a good deal of smoke) and from the meagre bed of the prostitute. All this is an anecdote, an incident which exists and does happen—the devil knows why and wherefore. The discussions between the girl and the student about God and about the social revolution—is the substance and *soul* of it all. All these "socialist-girls" and "socialist-students" are charming, attractive, romantic; but how is all this important?! Nothing *important* emerges from it. . . . What are the student and prostitute about in discussing God? Only an object of grief to the principal when he sees the youth not studying, and an object of amusement to the lady of the brothel when she sees her girl not "working." All this is simply not needed and not interesting, except perhaps as a pretty subject for a story. The *craftsmanship* of the story exists and remains: "there is literature." Just so, but only as *reading* matter. Schedrin's complaint that "the reader is merely reading" . . . is quite absurd as regards Russian literature, which indeed serves no other purpose but that of being "merely read," since indeed it is "written" solely for this purpose. . . .

Indeed, it is all just "sweet illusions."

> Not for our dire miseries
> Are we granted wonderful illusions . . .

as Karamzin has so finely put it. And all our "realists," Mikhailovsky included, are dreamers on paper—in the best case, dreamers of "perfect honour" ("an honest writer").

Six years ago "my Friend" told me as she returned home from the Church of All the Sorrows: "There came in a woman, not old, neither young. Poorly dressed. Had six children, all small ones, with her. She prayed fervently and cried bitterly. She is sure not to have lost her husband—hers were different tears, a different tone. Most probably her husband either drinks or has lost his job. Such grief, such prayer I have never seen."

This could not possibly "occur" to Gleb Uspensky, for Uspensky's is a "different tone."

Generally, *family life*, not "social-*fiancés*," but social *workers*, has by no means occurred in Russian literature. Indeed Russian literature does not describe *work*, but only "young people" discussing *work*. Just fiancés and students. As a matter of fact the work is actually done not by them, but by their *fathers*. But all fathers are contemptible, "reactionary," and to students their fathers are what partridges are to sportsmen.

Here Tolstoy represents the great exception, he treated *the family*, *the man who works*, *the fathers*, *with respect*. . . . His is the first and sole case in Russian literature, without imitators or followers. That is why he did not finish his *Decembrists*, simply because of the great *emptiness of the subject*. All the Decembrists are just the same "social-*fiancés*," the forerunners of the prostitute and student, discussing heaven and earth. Though they wore shoulder-straps and were counts. But *it was not working Russia*: and Tolstoy abandoned the theme. This was serious and noble on his part. That he did not finish

The Decembrists is as significant and noble, as original and great as the fact that he hewed out and finished *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenin.*

* * *

"Well now, you have criticized everyone. . . . But *yourself*, are you any better?"

"No. But this is what I am saying, that we must lament not the *circumstances* of our life, but *ourselves.*"

What I am concerned with is a completely different theme, a different direction, a different literature.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

In Russia all ownership arose from "he begged," or "a grant was made him," or "he stole." Of *labour* as the basis of ownership there is very little. And that is why it is not strong and is not respected.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Always dreaming, and always one thought: how to avoid *work.*

(*About Russians.*)

* * *

All literature is babble. . . . Or nearly all.
Exceptions are killingly few.

* * *

Cynicism through *suffering*? Did it ever occur to you?

(1911.)

* * *

Would I like fame after my death (which I feel I have deserved)?

For many years a ceaseless pain has been racking

my soul, the pain stifling the desire for fame. Which pain (if the soul be immortal), I feel, *would be intensified if I achieved fame.*

Therefore I do not want it.

* * *

I should like a few people to remember me, but *by no means praise me*: and only on condition that they remembered me *along with those near to me.*

Unless they, and their *goodness*, their *honour* are remembered, I too do not want to be remembered.

* * *

Whence such a feeling? *From the feeling of guilt*, and also from the deep, sincere consciousness that I am not a good man. God has given me talent: but that is a different thing. The more terrible question —*am I a good man*, is answered in the negative.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Two angels sit on my shoulders: the angel of laughter and the angel of tears. And their eternal dispute constitutes my life.

(*On the Troitsky Bridge.*)

* * *

Literature has soared up like an eagle to the skies. And has fallen down. Now it is quite clear that literature is not the " sought-after invisible city."

(*On the back of the lines.*)

* * *

Rebecca N.N. started coming to see us. On the third evening when I began talking to her about the *details* (unknown to me or not quite clear) of the *mikvah*, she gave me a few answers, and then, after a silence, she remarked:

" This *name* I pronounce *aloud for the first time.*"

" Mikvah? "

" But it is an *obscene word*, and among Jews it is not admissible to speak it aloud."

I grew agitated.

" But the mikvah, isn't it *sacred*? "

" Yes, it is *sacred*. . . . So we were told. . . . But the name is *obscene*, and isn't pronounced aloud or in the presence of others." . . .

But, really, this is the " discovery of the Pythagorian theorem ": it means then that the Jews possess *that very conception*, that the " obscene " and the " sacred " can be *compatible ! coincident ! one !!!* Nothing of the kind do Christians possess, nor is it possible with them. Hence a vast historical consequence:

(1) With Christians everything " obscene,"—and inasmuch as the "obscenity " grows—becomes " sin," " evil," " filth," " disgusting ": so that without comments, evidence, and demonstrations, *without theory*, the sphere of sexual life and of the sexual organs—this domain of universal shyness, of universal reserve—has *sunk down into the infernal regions* of " Satanism," of " Devilry," and has for its foundation the " terrible, unbearable, abomination," " universal stench."

(2) But among Jews thought has been so *trained* that what is " obscene " (for the tongue, the eye, and the mind) does not at all appraise the inward properties of the object, does not say anything of its content; since there is one thing, always " close at hand," familiar, the weekly ritual, which being " the height of obscenity " in name, never *pronounced aloud*, yet is at the same time " sacred."

It is not amplified, it is not pointed out; it simply *is*, and all *know* it.

In this way *nothing has as yet been said* to the Jews, but there is given them a *thread*, holding on to which and walking with which *everyone may himself-herself approach the idea*, the conclusion, the identity that "this" (the organs and functions), though not shown to anyone, and though the name is "obscene" and not pronounced, is nevertheless *sacred*.

Hence a direct deduction respecting the "secret sacred" that is in the world; "the sacred that must be hidden" and *which should never be named*; the mysteries, *mysterium*. There is disclosed the origin of the very name, and there is cleared up the very body of the mystery. Surely, all our sacraments are open, performed in daylight, before the people; and it is patent that the *ancient* mysteries, which some people wished to connect with ours—and those people were theologians—have indeed nothing in common with them, except the *name* and *pseudo-name*.

* * *

I go on to ponder over the mikvah: here is a girl who blushes and frowns (she is a very well-read Moscow student, about twenty-six), and yet admits: "with us this name is never *pronounced aloud*; . . . this *name* is considered obscene. Yet called by an obscene name, the *thing* itself is sacred." . . .

It is necessary to know the "particulars" of the mikvah.

It is not deep—about three or four feet. If deeper it is "trepha." Why? What's the reason? It is "no good," for a *something sacred* that is occurring there, but about which not a single word has been written or uttered. Only the Rabbis looked at it, measured it; and if it is not deeper than three or four feet, they say "kosher"—good. Why?—*this has not been explained to the people*.

The immersion is watched by members of the synagogue; in the case of women—by old women; and they shout to the women who immerse for the first time that *the hair must not be visible on the surface of the water*. Given a depth of three or four feet, it is obviously necessary to sit right down, and this is hard to do and it costs an effort. And they all obediently fulfil it without understanding why. But the Rabbis say "kosher!" If she sits right down—"*kosher*"; not low enough—"trepha." And in a cavity not deeper than three or four feet!

The water is not fetched from outside, is not *poured into the cavity*, but springs from the soil, *is water from the soil*. But water from the soil is *water* from a *well*. Thus, to sit down in the mikvah always means "to sit down at the bottom of the well." They go down a very long and narrow staircase, which allows only two or three to walk abreast. The steps, as I saw at Friedberg, are "cyclopian," about two feet thick, and in descending it is necessary "to open the legs wide." . . . They do not go, but "step," "crawl," making an effort, straining themselves. . . . The descent is very low and deep, and it takes about ten minutes to ascend. And the woman (in her refreshment and joy)—a permanent feeling after immersion—naturally as she comes upstairs just perceptibly throws her head back: before her eyes for ten minutes is presented the spectacle of "widely opened" legs, rounded bellies, and clean shaved modest parts (according to ritual). "All in man is the likeness and image of God" crosses the mind of those ascending during that ecstatic religious minute. "Kosher! Kosher!" the Rabbis pronounce.

And in order that all this should be done slowly, leisurely, according to the law,"*there may not immerse in the mikvah two simultaneously*."

Thus, breathless and happy, they (men) descend and ascend, and they (women) ascend and descend.

But now they are all gone. Empty water, a basin. And an old Jew, like Moses, like Abraham, is the last to come up to the shallow basin of water. And, suddenly, placing wax candles on the edges of the basin, he lights them all!! Here is the " miserly knight " of Judaism in front of his " treasures." . . . Yes, to everyone it is revolting, a shame, " it shall not be pronounced aloud." But it was *I who built the mikvah* and I know what and wherefore: all Israel will live by this for ever, *if only he does not give this up*; and I light the sacred light here, for nowhere else is the air so charged with the bodies of Israel, and all $\frac{\text{men}}{\text{women}}$ have breathed in this air, breathed in and swallowed it, and now it is flowing in an aromatic and visual current in the veins of every $\frac{\text{man}}{\text{woman}}$ and begetting images and desires, by which Israel is agitated, individually and collectively.

* * *

" Lighted wax candles "—this is a translation *into our language, into our ritual* of what the law says to Israel: " the mikvah is sacred." In the Talmud is found the saying: " God is mikvah, for He purifies." I don't remember if it says there " the souls of " Israel.

But let us leave the old Jew and come to ourselves, into our setting, into our mode of life, in order to explain this ancient institution of the Jews and to make us realize its soul. Let us imagine one of our dances. Movement, conversation, news, politics. The elegance of everything and the ladies' dresses. . . . Room opening into room, with white pillars and walls. And, behold, one of the guests who has danced, tired by the dancing, goes into a remote side

room; and seeing a basin of cold water on the table, left there forgotten and unheeded, he circumspectly looks round, shuts the door, and taking out the excited and agitated part, immerses it in the cold pure water . . . until it cools down.

He does what the Jews do in the mikvah and the Mussulmans in their ablutions.

And he comes out. All hot, a woman rushes in there. . . . She is hot, because men pressed her hands, because she made an assignation, she fixed it for to-night, immediately the ball was over. On seeing the basin, she takes it, places it on the floor—and also with a circumspect glance round and closing the door, she does the same as the man has just recently done.

It is what the Jewesses do in the mikvah.

And many guests, in the end all of them, do the same, assured that not a single eye saw them.

If one saw it they would die of shame. That is the exclamation which Rebecca N.N. uttered: "*the name is obscene.*"

So far—we and what we did, coolness and cleanliness. All rational.

Let us return to Judaism.

Let us imagine that through the garret window, from a dark corner, a Jew has seen all that has taken place. We should turn away and pay no attention. But he would not act like that: his "circumcision" has given him a different vocation, has placed him differently. Opposed to our disgust, his eyes kindle. He crawls out. He doesn't need the dance, and won't go to the ball. His place is here. He takes the basin to his quarters, very careful not to spill the water. And shutting himself in so that no one can see him, he places the basin on the table and lights a number of image lamps (the *origin* of lamps is in

Egypt) and, covering his head with a veil, as though there stood before his eyes a something he dare not look at, he begins to murmur words in an unintelligible language.

He utters prayers and incantations.

This is Judaism.

And the prayers are good ones. The Jew prays: "Let them dance. These follies will pass. I pray for that which they will need in old age—*for health, for prolongation of their life*; that life itself may be fresh and strong; that they shall not ache, and what they have immersed and washed here shall never ache. Ah, they know not now, for they are in love, and speak of their work and promotion. I have gone through all promotions and I want nothing. I know how *happiness depends on this that in these parts* nothing shall be soiled, dirtied, weakened, but that it all shall be bright and honest, as a good bill, and as promising as a new-born babe. I am a stranger to them, but I pray my Secret God that he may preserve in the whole world, *in them all*, and bless these parts for the eternal fecundity of the world and for the blossoming of the whole earth which He, the Gracious, hath *created*. Amen."

* * *

. . . And all are running, running . . . in a monstrous crowd. Whither? What for?

"You ask why the universal *volo*?"

But there is no *volo* here; rather legs climbing, bellies shaking. And no one attached to anything. It is a skating-rink, not life. . . .

(*In bed at night.*)

* * *

SOLITARIA

Laughter cannot kill anything. Laughter can only crush. And patience overcomes laughter.

(*On nihilism.*)

* * *

Technique, applied to the soul, gave it omnipotence. But it also crushed the soul. There appeared a "technical soul"—a *contradictio in adjecto*. And inspiration died.

(*On the Press and everything "modern."*)

* * *

Satan seduced the Pope by power; and literature he seduced by fame. . . .

But Herostrates had already pointed out the surest way of "preserving a name unto posterity." . . . And literature which only lives by the desire of "preserving a name unto posterity" has naturally in our times been penetrated throughout by Herostrateses.

No one finds it so easy to burn down Rome, as Dobchinsky.[1] Catilina would hesitate over it. Manilov[1] would feel sorry; Sobakevich[1] won't stir; but Dobchinsky would run his legs off: "By Jove! Rome only waited for *me*, and surely I was born to set *Rome on fire*. Look, good people, and remember *my name*."

The essence of literature . . . her very soul . . . is a "little lady."

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

I have been reading about the terrible, martyrlike life of Gleb Ouspensky: he was crushed by a debt of 1700 roubles; then the woman moneylender dogged his heels without leaving him in peace either in Moscow or in Petersburg.

He was the friend of the great radical poet

[1] All these are characters from *Gogol*.

Nekrasov and of the great radical critic Mikhailovsky. They obviously not only respected him, but *loved* him. (Mikhailovsky in a letter to me.)

But then, why didn't they *help him*? What a dark mystery is this! The same almost was the attitude of the almost millionaire Alexander Hertzen towards Belinsky. I am not a defender of the bourgeois; I have nothing to do with the bourgeoisie, nor with their destinies; but plain morals and common sense shout: "Why should manufacturers hand over their factories and machines to workmen—when they handed over absolutely nothing either Hertzen to Belinsky, or Mikhailovsky and Nekrasov to Gleb Ouspensky?

It is a sort of judgment on all proletarian doctrines and on all the proletarian ideology.

* * *

And the hungry are so hungry, and yet the revolution is right. But it is right not ideologically, but as an *impact*, as *will*, as *despair*. "I am not a saint and perhaps I am even worse than you; but I am hungry, I'm a wolf, hungry and agile, and also my hunger has given me courage; and you have been an ox for a thousand years; if once upon a time you had horns and hooves to kill me, now you are old and feeble, and I'm going to *devour you*."

Revolution and the "old order" are simply "old age" and as yet "undiminished strength." But it is not an ideal, not by any means an ideal!

All social-democratic theories are reduced to the thesis—"I must eat." Well, the thesis is correct. Against it even the Lord Almighty has nothing to say. "He who gave me a stomach must also provide me with food." Cosmogony.

* * *

Yes. But the dreamer walks away: for he loves his dream more than food. And in revolution there is no room for the dream.

And perhaps just because revolution has no room for the dream, it will not succeed. There will be a lot of broken crockery, but there will be no new building erected. For only he alone builds who is capable of an overpowering dream. Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci—they did build, but the revolution will " play them a most prosaic trick " and will strangle them in their youth, at the age of eleven or thirteen, when they suddenly discover something " of their own in their soul."

" Oh, you are proud; you don't want to mix with us, to *share*, to be chums. . . . Oh, you have a soul of your own, not a communal soul. . . . The community that gave life to your parents and to you—for both you and they, without the community, would have died from starvation—is now taking back what you owe it. Die! "

And " the new building," with the features of the ass, will crumble to pieces in the third or in the fourth generation.

* * *

Every movement of the soul in me is accompanied by *utterance*. And every utterance I want without fail to *write down*. It is an instinct. Was it not from such an instinct that (written) literature was born? For the idea of print does not occur to me and, consequently, Gutenberg came " later."

With us literature has become so confused with print that we forget altogether that it existed before print, and essentially not at all for publication. Literature was born " by itself " (silently) and for itself; and

only afterwards it began to be printed. But that is mere technique.

* * *

Remove prayer from the very substance of the world—remove it so that my tongue, my mind should unlearn the words of prayer, the work of prayer, its essence; so that I should not *be able* to pray, so that people should not *be able* to pray—and with protruding eyes and with a terrible howl I would run out of the house, and run, run, run until I dropped down. Without prayer it is utterly impossible to live. . . . Without prayer—there is madness and horror.

But all this is understood when one is about to cry. . . . Yet he who does not cry, who did not cry —how explain this to him? He can never understand. And surely there are many people who never cry.

As husband he did not love his wife; as father he did not care for his children; his wife was unfaithful, and he "waved his hand"; his son was expelled from school, he abused the school and sent the boy to another school. Tell me, what can religion say to such a "positivist"? He will shrug his shoulders and smile.

"Yes, but he is not *everybody*."

Positivism is true, necessary, and even eternal, but only for a certain group of people. Positivism is necessary for "positivists," the point is not in positivism, but in the positivist: man here, as in anything else, comes before theory.

Yes. . . .

A religious man comes before all religion, and the

" positive " man was born a long time before Auguste Comte.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

In " my Friend " there has been given me a guiding star. . . . And for twenty years (ever since 1889) I have followed it: and all the good that I have done, or what was good in me during that time, it all came from her; and all that is bad in me came from myself. And I was obstinate. Only my heart always cried when I deviated from her. . . .

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

And mere bragging only, and only the one question in everyone: " What *part* am I to play in *this*? " If he is not to play a " part in this," then it may go to the devil.

(*Examining my coins. On politics and the Press.*)

* * *

What nice things you meet in a man when you don't at all expect it.

And what a lot of vicious things—also when you don't expect it.

(*In the street.*)

* * *

Create spirit, create spirit, create spirit! Look, it has all crumbled to pieces. . . .

(*In the Zagorodny Square at night; prostitutes all round.*)

* * *

The point of the matter is that our talents are somehow bound up with vices, and our virtues—with colourlessness. Well, try and get out of this " hole."

In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases " virtue " is

simply this: "I do not want to," "I have no desire," "I want it so very little." . . . A virtuous biography, or an epoch of good morals (in history) is merely a personality quite unoriginal, and a time quite "timeless." All "wanted so very little." Thanks!

(*Driving in a cab to Zelenino.*)

* * *

I am happy alone, and also with people. I am neither a solitary nor a sociable. But when I am by myself I am complete, and when with others I am not complete. Alone, I am after all happier.

Alone I am happier for this reason that when alone I am with God.

I could give up my talents, literature, the future of my "I," fame or popularity—I could do that rather too readily; but happiness, well-being . . . I wonder. But I should never be able to give up God. To me God is the "warmest." With God I am most warm. With God I am never bored or cold.

After all God is my life.

I only live for Him, through Him. Apart from God I am not.

What is God to me? Am I afraid of Him? Not in the least. Will He punish me? No. Will He give me future life? No. He feeds me? Through Him I exist and was born? No.

What then is He to me?

My perpetual sadness and joy. A peculiar one related to nothing.

Is not God then "my mood"?

I love the one who makes me grieve and rejoice, who speaks to me, comforts me.

It is a Some One. It is a Personality. God to me is always "he." Or "thou"; always close to me.

My God is my peculiar one. He is only *my* God, and nobody else's yet. If He is somebody else's, then I do not know Him, and am not interested in knowing Him.

" My God "—is boundless intimacy and boundless individuality. This intimacy is like a little funnel, or even two funnels. From my " social I " goes out a funnel, narrowing down to a point. Through that point-aperture issues only one ray: from God. Beyond that point there is another funnel, no longer narrowing down, but extending into infinity: this is God. There is God. So that God is

(1) my intimacy, and

(2) infinity, in which the universe itself is but a part.

* * *

I myself always abuse Russians. I do little else save abuse them. " I am a most unbearable radical Schedrin." But why do I hate everyone who also abuses them? And the only people I hate are those who hate and those particularly who despise Russians.

Yet without a doubt I do despise Russians to the point of loathing. Anomalous.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

From my polemics with the fool P.S. I have after all made 300 roubles. This is a third of the price of the tetradrachm of Antiochus VII Grippa, with Pallas Athene encircled by phalli (2,400 francs). At Nuribey's there was also for sale a tetradrachm with Aphrodite, between a lion and a bull, seated on a throne and *smelling a flower*. This I could not afford to buy. (Both are unique.)

* * *

ROZANOV

From the foundation of the world there have been two philosophies: the philosophy of the man who for some reason longs to give someone a flogging; and the philosophy of the flogged man. All our Russian philosophy is that of the flogged man. But from Byron's Manfred and up to Nietzsche the Western philosophy has been suffering from the "Sollogubian" hitch—"whom shall I give a little flogging"?

Nietzsche was respected on account of his being a German, and also because he suffered (illness). But if a Russian, and in his own name started in the spirit: "he's falling, push him down!", he would simply be called a scoundrel and nobody would think of reading him.

(*After reading Perzov's* BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW.)

* * *

The victory of Platon Karatayev [a character in *War and Peace*] is still much more important than it was thought to be: it is indeed the victory of Maxim Maximovich over Pechorin [characters in Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time*], *i.e.*, the victory of one of the two tremendous literary currents over the other. . . . It might not have happened at all. . . . But Tolstoy gave his life for "Maxim Maximovich" (his Nicolay Rostov, the artilleryman Tushin, Platon Karatayev, Pierre Bezoukhov's philosophy, which became Tolstoy's own philosophy). "Non-resistance to evil" is neither Christianity nor Buddhism: but it is indeed the *Russian element*—the "*uninterrupted nature*" of the East-European plain. The only Russian rebels—are the "nihilists." And here it will be extremely curious to see how is it all going to end; *i.e.*, how the unique Russian *rebellion* will end.

But this explains in the highest degree the power, and significance, and stability, and stubbornness of nihilism. "We must somewhere"—it doesn't matter where—"start a little rebellion": and for a people of eighty millions, of course, "it should be done." Their bones have got stiff through "sheer endurance."

(*On the same occasion.*)

* * *

My Lord! my eternity! Why does my soul so leap when I think of Thee? . . .

And all is held in Thy hand: that it holds me I always feel.

(*Night of Dec.* 25, 1910.)

* * *

I am choked with thought. And how pleasant to me to live in that choked state. That is why my life, despite its thorns and tears, is after all a joy.

(*At Zelenino.*)

* * *

Even a fool can "lead me by the nose"; and I may know that he is a fool, and that he is leading me to harm, finally to "everlasting perdition"—yet I follow him. "To my honour" it must, however, be observed that in the cases of my "being led by the nose" half relates to my profound, utter incapacity to say to the man: "you are a fool," as well as "you deceive me." I never once said it in my life. And this simply in order not to place my "fellow-man" in an awkward position. I pretend, sometimes for years, that all his advice is very wise, or that he himself is *comme il faut* and looks after my interests. A quarter of these cases relates to my profound (from childhood) indifference to external life (if there be

no danger). But one quarter, however, is the manifestation of sheer minus and lack of will—without any external and subsidiary reasons. . . .

A perfectly different thing is my dream (life): as regards that I never stirred one iota under anyone's influence whatsoever, never; it was the same in my childhood, too. In that respect I was a perfectly "un-brought up" man, utterly unyielding to "cultural influences."

Almost in proportion to the absence of *will to live* (to realization) I possessed a stubbornness of *will to dream*. I should say it was even more constant, and more persistent. . . . Indeed, I never "stirred one iota and yielded to nothing."

To look at me—I am "all-declinable."

In myself (subject)—*absolutely undeclinable*; non-compatible. A sort of "adverb."

* * *

I am like a baby in its mother's womb, which does not at all wish to be born. "I'm quite warm where I am." . . .

(*In a cab, at night.*)

* * *

Abraham was called by God. In my case God was called by me. . . . That's the whole difference.

* * *

After all not a single Biblical scholar noticed this peculiarity and strangeness of the Biblical story, that it was not Abraham who was looking for God, but God who was wanting Abraham. The Bible tells clearly that Abraham declined for a long time to conclude the covenant. He ran away, but God

caught him. Only then he said: " I will be true to Thee, I and my heirs."

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

I longed for nothing so much as for *humiliation.* " Fame " at times gladdened me—with a purely piggish pleasure. But this never lasted long (a day or two); then would come the former longing—to be humiliated.

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

About my death: " this rubbish should be swept out of the world." And when this " should " comes I shall die.

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

I am not needed. Of nothing am I so convinced as of this, that I am not needed.

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

Dear, lovely ones! What a number of you, precious ones, I have met on my way. The first in time was J. (Julie). Simple, self-denying. But like a star among all is my " nameless " one. . . . " God has not given me your name, and I don't want to bear my former name, because. . . . " And she called herself by no name, that is, she signed her letters with the initial of her Christian name. I used to laugh: " only Queens or Grand Dukes sign like that." . . . She did not see it, did not reply, but went on signing her letters with V., the initial of her Christian name. I made it one of my *noms-de-plume.*

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

Literature is the most disgusting kind of traffic. And doubly disgusting is it because certain *talent* is mixed up with it. And the objects of the traffic are real spiritual values.

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

In the course of a few days humiliation always passes into such a radiance of soul as cannot be compared with anything. It is right to say that certain, and the highest, spiritual illuminations are unattainable without previous humiliation; that certain spiritual absolutes thus remain for ever hidden from those who have always triumphed, conquered, been on top.

How crude, and hence also how unhappy was Napoleon. . . . After Jena he was more pitiable than a poor beggar to whom the servants of a rich house say: God bless you.

Is it not on this mystery of *universal psychologicalness* (if universal psychologicalness does exist) that the state of soul is based, in which it may be said that finally " he wishes to suffer " ? . . .

How very much better we are after suffering! . . . Is it not on this that democracy's " gain without loss " is based? Democracy is not at all born in golden swathing bands of morality; it is frail like all. But democracy is in the " lowly estate," and its moral aureole has attracted everyone to it. . . .

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

Truth is higher than the sun, higher than the heaven, higher than God: for if *God* too began *not*

with truth, then he is not God, and heaven is a swamp, and the sun a brass plate.

(*On the back of the lined sheet.*)

* * *

G. [God] as it were pointed out to man for ever and anon *where* it is possible to *meet* him.

" Look for me not in the woods nor in the fields, nor in the wilderness, not on the peak of the mountain, nor in the valley below, nor in the waters, nor under the earth—but . . . *where* I made the covenant with Abraham your father." . . .

Astonishing. But whither does this lead one who thinks, searches, divines?

But, in that case, how understandable it becomes why asexualists are at the same time also atheists: they do not meet with God, do not see him, do not hear him, do not know him. . . .

* * *

The soul is passion.

* * *

And hence remotely and sublimely: " I am the fire that consumeth." (God about Himself in the Bible.)

Hence also: talent increases when passion increases. Talent is passion.

(*In a cab, at night.*)

* * *

" Vasili Vasilievich, do vote for the Octobrist party," asked Borya [Souvorin-fils, editor of the *Novoye Vremya*], puffing at his pipe.

" Your Octobrists, Borya, are blockheads; but since your wife has won-der-ful shoulders, and your sister is chaste and inaccessible, I will vote for the Octobrists."

And I voted for them (in the Third Duma): since I could not find the address of doctor Sokolov (the leader of the Petersburg Social-Democrats—somewhere in the Grechesky Prospect), and the damned voting paper I lost of course the very same day I received it.

* * *

"What events! What events! Vasili Vasilievich, you ought to write something about them!" said the secretary of "our paper," kind N. I. Afanasiev, as he crossed the room.

His wife is a Frenchwoman and speaks no Russian at all. I can't understand how they converse "in moments of endearment": surely it can't be done in utter silence. . . .

"Which events, damn it?" I thought. For I was looking for "subjects for articles." In reading the newspaper, I certainly look for matter in small type, where it is more amusing: one surely does not want to read these leading articles and feuilletons, the perusal of which wastes a whole day.

"Which 'events,' Nicolay Ivanovich?"

"Why," he replied, almost from the doorway, "freedom of conscience, the abolition of the poll-tax, and the almost complete revision of all laws."

"Indeed, these are 'events': with some effort one could write any amount of leading articles on them."

This was at the time when Father Gapon and Witte were booming. But to me it seemed that there was nothing particular happening. But that talk of his: "what events"—how it worried me.

* * *

It is astounding that at times I look with widely opened eyes at an "event," and even write articles about it; finally, I utter about it most distinct words

of a clear, significant meaning, precisely to the point and core of the event; and yet I do not see it at all, do not know it at all, I don't think anything definite about it, and don't know "whether I want it or not." I myself became glad (in my soul) when *my ear* caught my own words: "Gentlemen! We ought to rejoice not at that the Manifesto [establishing a parliamentary system in Russia] has been issued; but that it could not be otherwise, that we have exacted it!"

This I said when Stolypin, entering the room where we all sat, announced that "the Tsar had signed the Manifesto (of October 17)." All became excited and champagne was ordered. Suddenly I became solemnly attuned, with something "grand in my soul" (I just felt a warmth in my heart) and I said those words which indeed struck to the core of the event. . . .

And yet it did not occur to me that it had to do with the Constitution. So much so that when I went home I had only the idea that for three or perhaps even for five days I might have a rest from writing articles. I came home and said this, and also said that for the next two days I should not have to go to the office. Accordingly I asked them to prepare my linen, and I went off to the Turkish baths to lie there on the upper bench in vapour, "with all my cares gone." And in the evening I was rummaging among my papers and coins and drinking tea.

Suddenly the day after I learnt that "yesterday the people marched in the Nevsky with red flags!!! the sole and first time in Russian history!!! A unique moment, a unique sensation and experience."

Surely I can understand this.

Oh, yes!

But I lay in the vapour baths. I have a cuncta-

toriness of soul. An " event " I realize as deeply as only very few do, but I realize it three years later, months after I saw it. When I see it I think absolutely nothing about it. But I think (passionately and ardently) about what happened three years before. It has always been like that with me, from my youth, from my childhood.

* * *

People, would you like me to tell you a stupendous truth which not a single one of the prophets told you? . . .

" What! What! "

It is that private life is above everything.

" Ha-ha-ha! He-he-he! Ha-ha-ha! " . . .

Yes! Yes! Nobody has said it. I am the first. . . . Just sitting at home, and even picking your nose, and looking at the sunset.

" Ha-ha-ha! " . . .

I swear to you: this is more universal than religion. . . . All religions will pass, but this will remain: simply sitting in a chair and looking in the distance.

(*July* 23, 1911.)

* * *

Lord! Lord! Why hast Thou forgotten me? Doest Thou not know that every time Thou forgettest me, I lose myself.

(*On my experiments.*)

* * *

. . . Lord, I have divined the tetragram, I have divined it. It was not a name like " Paul " or " John," but it was an *invocation*; and it was not always pronounced even by the same person perfectly identically, but slightly-slightly changed in its

nuances, in its guttural breathings. . . . And not absolutely identically by various high priests. Through that variation in pronunciation the secret of its utterance has been lost in the ages. But, in truth, pious Jews even now pronounce it at times, but they know not *when*. In complete correspondence with my divination is this that " he who knows how to utter the tetragram possesses the world," *i.e.*, through God. Indeed, the mystery of this call and invocation consists in this that God cannot help responding to it and " appears then in all his glory." On the consciousness of the Jews there also flashes, like a shadow, the mysterious idea that it is not only they who need God, but that He, too, needs them. Hence their ethnological and religious pride, and their asking from God, and not always only praying to Him. . . .

But all this is contained in the invocation, in the breathing. . . . It consists only of vowels and aspirates.

* * *

Strictly speaking, Tolstoy has spent a profoundly banal life. . . . To him this has never even occurred.

No suffering, no " crown of thorns," no heroic struggles for convictions; and even no particularly interesting adventures. Perfect banality.

Well, he had adventures " with his ideas." . . . But this is a mere literary *entourage*—the same banality only sprinkled with scent.

* * *

It seems to me that Tolstoy was little loved, and that he felt it. After his death, to say nothing of his lifetime, not a single agonizing cry was heard, not a single mad act committed—the signs by which genuine attachment is recognized. " Everything

was reasonable in the highest degree "—and that is just the stamp of banality.

* * *

I am not yet such a scoundrel as to think of morality. A million years passed before my soul was let out into the world to enjoy it; and how can I suddenly say to her: " don't forget yourself, darling, but enjoy yourself in a moral fashion."

No, I say to her: " enjoy yourself, darling, have a good time, my lovely one, enjoy yourself, my precious, enjoy yourself in any way you please. And towards evening you will go to God."

For my life is my day, and it is my day, and not Socrates' or Spinoza's.

(*In a railway carriage.*)

* * *

It is well to move about with a store of great calmness in one's soul; for instance, in travelling. Everything then seems bright, significant, everything shapes to a good end.

But to sit in one spot is also well, but only with a store of great movement in the soul. Kant sat all his life long; but there was so much movement in his soul that through his " sitting " worlds moved.

* * *

Happiness is in effort—says youth
Happiness is in rest—says death.
I shall overcome everything—says youth,
Yes, but everything will end, says death.

(*In a railway carriage, Eidtkunen-Berlin.*)

* * *

I don't even know how they spell " morality "—with one *l* or two.

* * *

And who her father was—I know not; and who was her mother, and whether she had children, and what is her address—I don't in the least know.

(*On morality. St. Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Merezhkovsky always builds from other people's material, but with a sense of something native to himself. In this consists his honour and magnanimity.

Why did my ideas produce on Mikhailovsky the impression of being *ridiculous*, so that he declared: "this is stuff like Kifa Mokievich's"; why did it produce on Merezhkovsky the impression of being *tragic*, so that he said: "this is as turbulent as Nietzsche's; this is the *end* of, or at any rate a terrible *danger* to Christianity." Why? Merezhkovsky (obviously) perceived with a *strong* and *honest* mind what Mikhailovsky did not grasp both through the impotence and unfairness of his mind, a mind too lazy to work through themes which are not his, themes not *of his camp*. Yet the "family" and "procreation," on which I base everything, are more remote and unnecessary to Merezhkovsky than to Mikhailovsky; they are even hostile to Merezhkovsky.

But Merezhkovsky has grasped with his soul—not with his heart or mind—but with his whole soul, that idea of mine, and has made it his own; he opposed it to the world of Christianity, to the core of this world—to asceticism; and he has grasped whole worlds. In that way he has "discovered the family" *for himself*, *inwardly* discovered it—under my impulse, under my indication. And this is in its full significance *his* "discovery," new to him, fully and utterly his *independent discovery* (why did not Mikhail-

ovsky discover it?). I furnished the compass and as it were said: "there is land in the West." And he discovered America. In this consanguinity with other people's ideas consists his magnanimity. And God has rewarded him.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Oh, my sad "experiments." And why did I want to know everything? Now I shall not die in peace as I expected.

(1911.)

* * *

"Man talks amusingly about a great many things, but with relish—only about himself" (Turgenev). At first we smile at this expression, as at a very felicitous one. But then (in a year's time) we grow rather sad: poor man, they want to deprive him even of the right to talk about himself. He must not only undergo pain, suffer, but . . . he must also keep silent about it. And this witticism by Turgenev, who meant by it to convict man of cynicism, itself appears cynical.

I, on the contrary, have observed that good people can in no other way be distinguished from bad people than by the way they listen to a man's talk about himself. If one listens willingly, without being bored, it is a true sign that the listener is a good, clean, straight man. One can be friends with him. One may trust him. But do not trust the friendship of the man who is bored when he listens to you: he thinks only of himself and is preoccupied with himself alone. Just as good a sign is talking about oneself: it means the man senses fellow-men in those around him. Talking to another person of oneself is an expression of sympathy with the other.

I am very sorry to confess that I neither loved to listen to such talk or to utter it. I am incapable even of doing so. This is the sign by which I consider myself a bad man.

* * *

Shperk said to me once: " not in your intentions, nor in your ideas, but in you *as man* there is something wrong, an impure alloy, something muddy in your organization or in your blood. I don't know what it is, but I feel it." He was very fond of me (I believe, more than anyone else save my own people). He was very penetrating, he knew " the roots of things." And if he said so, it must be true.

* * *

The bad in us is our fate. But it is necessary to know the *measure* of that fate, its direction, and to reckon " the degrees," as we do with thermometers. Which also lie, all of them, but learned men cope with this, making corrections.

Should I like to be only good? It would be so tedious. But what I should not like to be for anything on earth—is to be evil, harmful. In such a case I should prefer to die. But I was always clumsy. There is in me a terrible monstrosity of behaviour, to the point of not knowing " how to get up " or " how to sit down." I simply do not know *how*. And I do not understand *when* it is best to do all this. No awareness whatever of planes. Hence in life the nearer I get to people the more uncomfortable I become to them: their life through my approach becomes uncomfortable. And very many have suffered through me and very much so: without the slightest wish on my part.

That too is fate.

* * *

On the problem of man's being *out-of-place*. Once I stood in the little chapel, near the Square by the Vladimir Church. Perhaps I was inside the church, I forget now—it was fourteen years ago. And I noticed that I did not hear what was being sung and read—that I did not even listen. And yet I had come with the *intention* of listening and worshipping. A thought flashed through me then: "like a *foreigner*—at every place, at every time, whenever it was, wherever I was." Everything is foreign to me, with a strange, as it were, predestined estrangement. Whatever I do, whomever I meet—I can't fuse myself with anything. A non-copulative man—spiritually. A man—*solo*.

All this was expressed in the word "foreigner," which came out within me in a whisper, as the greatest condemnation of myself, as the greatest grief for myself and within myself.

That too is fate.

"As we are born so we go down to the grave." Involved in this must be some particular laws of conception. Heredity. When my parents conceived me they must have been afflicted by some hiatus of thought, by some fog of thought, or lapse of thought: and in the child this has become irreparable.

"The inevitable" . . .

"Foreigner." . . . "Where one has been hurt there one feels pain"—is it not because of this that I boundlessly love human *connectedness*, people in *connection*, in mutual *fondling*, *caressing*? Here my feeling towards them breaks down as it were all barriers. I hate nothing so much and am most hostile to everything that *separates* people, that prevents them from *fusing*, being *connected*, "becoming one flesh." Whether for a long time, or for a short while—I don't even raise that question.

Certainly it is better that it should be for ever; but if that be impossible, then let it be for a moment of time. This, of course, is goodness in me; but is it not remarkable that it sprang from non-goodness, from personal unhappiness, from vice? Mark the connection of things. And how can one help saying: Fate! Destiny! . . .

* * *

Do you know that religion is the most important, the most essential, the most needful? With the person who does not know this, not the alpha of discussion or conversation should be entertained.

Such a person should simply be *ignored*. Passed over in silence.

Yet who does know it? Are there many who do? That is why in our time there is almost *nothing* to speak about, nor *anyone* to speak to.

* * *

The connection of sex with God—greater than the connection of the mind with God, greater even than the connection of conscience with God—is gathered from this that all a-sexualists reveal themselves also as a-theists. Such gentlemen, as Buckle or Spencer, as Pisarev or Belinsky, who have said about " sex " no more words than about the Argentine Republic, are at the same time so astoundingly atheistical as though there had not been before them or near them any religion. They are literally " unbaptized " in a strange, peculiar sense. The " Maeterlinckian catharsis " for the last twenty or thirty years consisted in this, that very many people began to look into the root of things: one's sex, one's personal sex became of interest to all. Probably something must have happened in the semen (and in the ovum); it is remarkable that now human beings have already

begun to be born quite different from those of sixty or seventy years ago. There is being born a " new generation." . . . One sensible woman, the wife of a priest (A. A-va), said to me once: " The crisis among the clergy is now manifested in a great number of young wives of priests who are barren." She did not finish her thought then, but a year later I heard her say that " it was not the priests' wives who don't conceive, but that their husbands have not the strength to conceive in them." Astonishing.

Well, something of the kind has taken place in the whole " Maeterlinckian generation." It took place not in the mode of thinking, but in the sex; and only afterwards also in the mode of thinking.

* * *

Do I wish my doctrine to be widely known?

No.

A great agitation would arise, and I love peace so much . . . and the sunset, and the quiet evening pealing of bells.

* * *

The defects which I have not got are indeed revolting to me. But my own defects, when I meet them in others, are not in the least revolting to me. And I would never condemn them.

Here is the *bound* of any judgment: *i.e.*, whether it is " competent " or " incompetent," in how far " one can rely on it." We all have little tails, only facing different directions.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

What is fine in my writings came not from me. Like a woman I could only conceive it and bring it

forth. Everything belongs to a much better person than myself.

My understanding and heart were expressed in this only that I could always place and see another above myself. And that was always easy and pleasant. Thank God, there is no envy in me at all, just as " rivalry " was always alien to me, unnecessary, beside the point.

* * *

Always doing something, planning something. . . .

(*About Jews.*)

* * *

The family is the most *aristocratic* form of life! . . . Yes! Despite misfortunes, mistakes, " accidents " (surely " accidents " have happened even in the history of the Church)—yet it is after all the only aristocratic form of life.

* * *

For twenty years I have been living in a continuously poetic state. I am very observant, although I am silent. And I do not remember a single day when I did not notice in " Her " something profoundly poetic; and when I see or hear something of hers (with one ear—during my work), inwardly a tear of ecstasy or admiration comes to my eyes. And that is why I am happy. And through that I even write well (it seems so to me).

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Do I want to react on life? To have an influence? Not particularly.

* * *

Your Mother.
(To my children.)

And we lived peacefully, day in day out, for many years. And it was the best part of my life.

(*Feb.* 25, 1911.)

* * *

I feel somehow sad (and frightened) at the thought that being dead (and moreover "an author") people will start praising me.

Perhaps this will be well-founded, but that appreciation will ignore my "regrettable incidents." And receiving not according to my deserts, I shall be ashamed, tormented, *guilty* there, "in the other world."

* * *

After my death if someone loves me, let him keep silent about it.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

My soul is interwoven of dirt, tenderness, and sadness.

Or:

It is like gold fishes, playing in the sun, but placed in an aquarium filled with dung-impregnated water.

And they are not suffocated there. Quite the contrary. . . . It does not sound like truth. And yet *it is so.*

* * *

God has gilded me all over.
I feel it. . . .
Lord! How much I feel it!

* * *

Every line of mine is holy writ (not in the scholastic, not in the ordinary sense), and every thought

of mine is a holy thought, and every word of mine is a holy word.

" How dare you? " shouts the reader.

" Don't you see, I dare," and I laugh at him in reply.

* * *

When—I believe it was at Hoffman's concert—I heard " Francesca da Rimini " for the first time, in a trance, I thought: " that is my soul."

That passage in the music where there is so clearly audible the movement of wings (astonishing!!!).

" That is my soul! That is my soul! "

I never dreamt even of such a *mass* of inner movement within myself, of which are woven my years, hours, and days.

I rush like the wind, I do not tire like the wind.

" Whither? What for? "

And finally:

" What do you love? "

" I love my dreams at night," I shall whisper to the wind I meet.

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

Old age in its gradualness is a loosening of attachment. And death is final coldness.

Nearing old age one is above all worried by one's irregular life—not in the sense of " one enjoyed it so little " (this does not even enter one's mind), but that one did not do *what was needed*.

To me at least the idea of " duty " only began to occur towards old age. Before I always lived by " motif," *i.e.*, by appetite, by taste, by what I wanted and what I liked. I can't imagine even such a " lawless " person as myself. The idea of " law "

as " duty " never even occurred to me. I only read about it in the Dictionary, under letter *D*. But I did not know what it was, and was never interested enough to know. " Duty was invented by cruel men to oppress the weak. And only fools obey it." Something like that. . . .

But I always had *pity*. Yet this too is my appetite, and gratitude—my taste.

* * *

It is surprising how I managed to accommodate myself to *falsehood*. It has never worried me. And for this odd reason: " what business is it of yours what precisely I think? Why am I *obliged* to tell you my real thoughts? " My profound subjectivity (the pathos of subjectivity) has had this effect that I have gone through my whole life as though behind a curtain, irremovable, untearable. " Nobody dare touch that curtain." There I lived, there *with myself* I was truthful. . . . And with the truth of anything I said on the other side of the curtain—it seemed to me that no one had anything to do. " I must say what is useful. Your criticism should go only as far as this: am I saying what is useful? And even that on the condition: " If it is harmful then don't take it." My aphorism at the age of thirty-five: " I write not on stamped paper," that is, you can always tear it up.

If nevertheless I did in most cases (I should say nearly always) write sincerely, it was not because of my love for truth—a love I not only lacked, but could not even imagine—but because of carelessness. Carelessness is my negative pathos. To tell a lie—for which purpose it is necessary to " invent," to " make ends meet," to " build up "—is more difficult than to say " what is." And I have simply put on

paper what is: which constitutes my whole truthfulness. It is natural, but it is not moral.

" I grow like this," and if you don't like it, don't look at it.

And therefore it often seemed to me (and perhaps it was and is so) that I am the most truthful and sincere of writers: although there is not a single grain of morality in this attitude.

" So God has made me."

* * *

The fusion of my life, *fatum*, especially of my thoughts, and above all of my writings with the divine *volo*, was always in me, from my very childhood, from my adolesence. And hence may be sprang my carelessness. I was careless for this reason that an inner voice, an invincible inner conviction, told me that everything I said God wanted me to say. This conviction was not always equally intense; at times this conviction, this belief approached a kind of white heat. I became, as it were, *strung up*, my soul became strung up, my thoughts acquired a perfectly different flow, and my tongue spoke of itself. Not always in such cases had I a pen close at hand; and then I *uttered* what was in my soul. . . . But I felt that in *what I uttered* was such a propulsion of force that walls would not endure, that institutions, laws, other people's convictions would not remain safe. . . . At such moments I felt that I was saying the absolute truth, and exactly under precisely the same angle of inclination, as it is in the universe, in God, in truth *qua* truth.

In most cases, however, it was not written down (I had no pen).

* * *

The feeling of criminality (as Dostoevsky had it)

I have never had: but there always was in me a feeling of my boundless weakness. . . .

Weak I began to become ever since the age of seven or eight. . . . A curious loss of will power over myself, over my actions, over the "choice of an activity," of a "job." For instance, I entered the Faculty of the University because my brother was at that Faculty, without any intellectual or other connection whatever with my brother, at the time. I always went through "the open door," and it was no matter to me which door was open. Never in my life did I make a *choice*, never did I hesitate in that respect. It was a strange lack of will, a strange impassivity. And always the thought: "God is with me." But whatever door I passed, I went not in the hope that God would not desert me, but through my sole interest "in God who was with me," and hence the resultant lack of interest as to what door I went in by. I went through the door where there was "pity" or "gratitude." Thanks to these two motives I still think that I was a good man; and God will forgive me much.

* * *

In Russia what a number of reputations, if not literary (there's not a single literary reputation) then journalistic reputations, are soaked in the blood of the young. Oh, if the young could ever believe that those who never pushed them into that bloody business [political terrorism] love and *respect* them—their priceless eternal souls, their dark and lovely "futures" (their whole world)—much more than these "sycophants" to whom they have trusted themselves. . . . But they will never believe it! They think that they are lonely in the world, deserted: and the only "near ones" left to them are those

who whisper to them: " Go forward, we are already old and useless, but you—you are heroic and noble." Never has this devilish whisper been understood. Nekrasov, a member of the English Club, who played cards with millionaires, urged them more than any others with his poem:

Take me into the camp of *the perishing*. . . .

This poem, indeed, is all soaked in blood. People more unhappy than our young people it is really impossible to imagine. Therein is manifested all our actuality (in its absurdity) " like a nightmare," which has sustained in our young this black and bitter idea (" we are deserted by all "). Indeed, what did our young people see and hear from the cast-iron Generals, from the frozen State Councillors, from the dry-goods' merchants, from (almost) the whole Russian people. But perhaps they will remember their old grannies, their old aunties. . . . Therein perhaps is a hope. Lord, how terrible our life is, how gloomy indeed.

* * *

Chukovsky is after all a very good writer. But what is " fine " in him, literature gets from him (his burying of corpses); but it won't remain *for himself*. The point is that he is very useful, but he is not a fine writer; and in literature this is *everything*.

But he is not a bad man as I have tried to show (my criticism of his portrait by Riepin).

(*Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Man relies on two anchors. His parents, " home," his childhood—that is one anchor. " First love," the age of thirteen-fourteen, is a crisis; a presage of the " other anchor's approach." . . . Setting out and—

haven: the harbour from which you are "unmoored" and the harbour in which you are "moored." The final "mooring" is the grave; and it is remarkable that love is already leading up to it. But love is "I give birth again," and shall be for my children the harbour from which they are "unmoored."

From this *composition of life* how evident it becomes that our *genitalia* are more important than our brain. "The brain" is the captain; the steersman. But for "navigation" what is important is evidently not the captain, a replaceable and hired person, but the eternal "unmoorings" and "moorings." The East India Company at any rate does not exist for the benefit of the captains, any more than the Volga river navigation and the grain trade do.

I.e., "beauty of face," damn it, is more important to a girl than "intellectual capacity." And so it must be. So they feel. But it is *they* only. But what about the school? the whole organization of education? "Learn by heart square equations" and "the rivers of South America"; "don't forget the tributaries of the Rio de La Plata." But how understandable and how nice even it is that girls don't take them in.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Like a "sturdy old wolf" he gorged himself on Russian blood and, satiated, dropped into the grave.

(*On Schedrin, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

She gave birth, therefore she had the right to give birth. "Can" nowhere else coincides so well with "I have the right" as in giving birth.

Your old fellow said: "I can, therefore I must."

SOLITARIA

He surely had in view Hofrats setting off in the morning to their various offices, and also young men who can (" and therefore . . . ") abstain from girls. Let us suppose it is so. But surely not different would be the reasoning of young men. " I can beget a child on her, therefore I must beget it on her." What would your Königsbergian sage say to this?

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway car.*)

* * *

What is the pathos of égalité? Standing (in my own opinion) rather high in literature, I would never dream of rushing up to her, or of avoiding her (égalité). " It is all the same to me." But Poprys-chin [1] would rush to égalité so as to feel the equal of the King of Spain, and Bobchinsky [1] would certainly long to be on égalité with the Governor-General. What does it mean then? Shall we say that the spirit of égalité is the longing of all that is abased, self-pitying, of all that is " halved " trying to be on a level with an entity?

* * *

Darwin in pronouncing the égalité of the chim-panzee to man has done much more for the French spirit than for the English (so people thought; so did N. Y. Danilevsky think).

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Look, I too am ending by beginning to hate everything Russian. How sad, how terrible.
It is especially sad at the end of my life.

* * *

[1] Characters from *Gogol.*

Those sleep-worn faces, unswept rooms, unpaved streets. . . . Disgusting, disgusting.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

And why have a friendly reader? Do I write for the reader? No, I write for myself.

" Why then do you publish? "

They pay for it.

The subjective has coincided with an external circumstance.

Thus occurs literature. And only thus.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

And what was the arrow I always felt in my heart? And from which, in the main, comes all my literature.

It is my sin.

Through sin I got to know everything on earth, and through sin (repentance) I was related to everything on earth.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Every love is beautiful. And only it alone is beautiful.

For the only thing on earth " true in itself " is love.

* * *

Love excludes falsehood; the first " I lied " means: " I love no longer," " I love less."

If love is extinguished, truth too is extinguished. Therefore to " carry truth on earth " means to love always and truly.

* * *

Fame is a serpent. May her bite never touch me.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

SOLITARIA

To lie in the warm sand after bathing is in its way worth any philosophy.

And the lazzaroni, always lying in the sand, they are a splendid school of philosophy.

(*Examining my coins.*)

* * *

The Russian Church represents a remarkable phenomenon. Lutheranism and Catholicism are in many respects more remarkable, but there are aspects in which the Russian Church is more remarkable than they. Let us consider that quiet minds, such as Bouslayev, Tikhonravov, Klyuchevsky, such as S. M. Soloviov, never tried *to correct anything* in it, and were perfectly satisfied with it. And yet these were believing, religious men, men of pious life in the best sense of the word, in the *quietly*-Russian sense. Of religion they never thought specially, but worked all their lives, behaved nobly, and created. Religion to them was a kind of side foundation which supported all that mountain of noble work. There is no doubt that had they been "unbelieving," they would have been neither so noble, nor so active. Religious scepticism they would have met with the greatest contempt. "Cross-examination" of Orthodoxy all started below (or away from) that floor—by minds more caustic, mobile, and petty. Tolstoy, Rozanov, Merezhkovsky, Hertzen are no longer a Bouslayev with his calm sunset. They are a hubbub and storm, spitefulness and nerves. Maybe there is here and there something remarkable. But not quiet, not clear, not harmonious.

Orthodoxy fits in in the highest degree with a harmonious spirit, but does not fit in in the highest degree with a disturbed spirit. Allegorically speaking, there is Zeus in it; in Alexander Nevsky (alle-

gorically again) it even admitted " Mars." During the " Petersburg period " (that of the Slavophiles) they kept on building temples to Alexander Nevsky, to this " Ares " and at the same time " Romulus " of Russia, having brushed aside the Kiev martyrs. Thus, Mars and Zeus (*their elements*)—that is Orthodoxy; but there is not in it Aphrodite, or Juno, " the mistress of the house," or Saturn and remote mysticism.

(*On the blank sheet of a letter received.*)

* * *

If you fail to give something, there is anguish in the soul. Even if you fail to give a present.

(*About a little girl at the railway station in Kiev, to whom I wanted to make a present of a pencil; but I hesitated, and she and her grandmother went on.*)

The little girl came back and I gave her the pencil. She had never seen one like it, and I could hardly explain to her what a "wonderful thing" it was. How happy she was, and I too.

* * *

Who goes down with *a pure soul* into the earth? Oh, how much we need *purification.*

(*Winter*, 1911.)

* * *

I may be a " fool " (there are rumours), perhaps even a " swindler " (there is gossip to that effect); but the *width* of thought, the *incommensurability* of " horizons revealed "—no one has had that before me in the way I possess it. And all of it came from my own mind, without borrowing an iota even. Wonderful. I am simply a wonderful man.

(*On the sole of my slipper, bathing.*)

* * *

SOLITARIA

My mind got entangled, utterly entangled. . . .
All my life I have devoted to the *destruction* of what alone I love on earth. Is there a destiny sadder than that?

(*Summer*, 1911.)

* * *

Fate preserves those whom it robs of fame.

(*Winter*, 1911.)

* * *

They imagine that "I played up to the authorities." Whereas the peculiar trait in my psychology consists in such a strong feeling of a void around me —a void, silence, and non-living around and everywhere—that I hardly know, hardly believe, hardly admit that there are other people contemporaneous with me. It seems impossible and absurd, yet it is so.

* * *

Why is it that I so little desire fame or influence, and yet feel (at times) so anxious (although at moments it makes my soul happy) that nothing has come of my literary activity, that no one follows after me, that I have no "school"?

Simply because of a strange desire that people should be happy. One always judges "by oneself" (one can't do otherwise). And "by myself" I judge that it is impossible to be happy otherwise than by just having my ideas. I should be very glad if I could be dispensed with; and in that case, though I would have written everything just in the same way as I have done, I should be perfectly indifferent as to whether people read me or not.

* * *

In this sense the "desire of influence" is privily a very noble feeling: to have oneself as the friend of all and to have the whole world as one's friends.

* * *

But then there is no need to sign one's name, and yet I do it. It is strange. But, so far from having had a good time of it, "Rozanov" was more abused than praised. And the abuse was more crushing, and I believe more penetrating (in certain respects), than the praise.

(*In arranging these notes.*)

* * *

He was not clever, nor educated; to be more correct, he was not intelligent: but astonishingly talented. Whether he "got" money from Witte or not I do not know. But he was an absolutely honest man; for with one tenth of his talent people have ended by being "Privy Councillors" and living comfortably on their *investments* and pensions. And he died, if not a pauper, a poor man.

But not only because of this was he *absolutely honest*: there was in him something indefinable, by virtue of which, if even I had caught him by the hand with the handkerchief he had just picked from my pocket, I would have shaken his hand and said: "Serge, this is something inadvertent; indeed, I knew and do know *this very minute* that you are one of the most honest men in Russia." And he would have burst into angel's tears, into which the "honest" Kutler, enjoying a pension of six thousand roubles, could never burst.

(*About Sharapov, at his death.*)

* * *

SOLITARIA

I don't argue with God and I shall not betray Him for His withholding grace from me in answer to my prayer: I *love* Him, I am *devoted* to Him. And whatever He does I shan't utter a blasphemy, but shall only cry over myself.

(*The sad summer of* 1911; *her hand does not move.*)

* * *

The soul of Orthodoxy is in the gift of prayer. Its body is—the rites, the cult. But whoever thinks that apart from the rites there is nothing in it (Harnack, the professor) he, with all his cleverness, understands nothing about it.

* * *

He who loves the Russian people can't help loving the Church too. For the people and its Church are one. And only with Russians—the people and the Church are one.

(*Summer*, 1911.)

* * *

No interest at all in self-realization, a lack of all external energy, of the will to live. I am the most unself-realizing man.

* * *

I have had several superb letters from Maxim Gorky, in the course of this year. He is a splendid man. But if all the other " advanced " look at and see things in that light, then first of all, as compared with our horizon, what a limited horizon theirs is! Is it really true that the difference between radicalism and conservatism is the difference between a narrow and a wide field of vision, between shortsightedness and farsightedness? If so, does it then mean that we shall conquer? And yet there is no hope of this.

(*Summer*, 1911.)

* * *

Gorky's fatum is that he is in fame and in the "higher estate." Yet by nature he is a fighter. With whom then can he fight, if all are knocked out? Surely not with Gringmut, nor with Katkov? Nor with Count Meschersky, whose very existence Gorky hardly suspects.

And his arms hung down.

The fighter has died far removed from the fight. I have written him about this, but strangely enough he has not understood anything in that idea.

* * *

Three men I have met more understanding, or, rather, more gifted, more original, more unusual than myself. Shperk, Rzy, and F—y. The first died when still a boy (at twenty-six), not having expressed himself in anything; the second was "Tentetnikov," who warmed his little belly in the sun. "Ivan Ivanovich, who plays the fiddle," so he once defined himself (metaphorically, in a certain article). The remarkable thing in their intellect, or truer—in their *soul*, in their *metaphysical* (*prenatal*) *experience*, was that they knew no mistakes; their opinions could be taken "blindfolded," without verification, without reflection. Their words, ideas, opinions, the most summary ones, often illuminated a whole domain of the universe. They were all almost Slavophiles, yet essentially—not slavophiles, but—"*singles*," "I's." . . .

The other famous men whom I have met—Rachinsky, Strakhov, Tolstoy, Pobedonoszev, Soloviov, Merezhkovsky—were not stronger than myself. . . .

I have felt something very *strong* and *independent* in Tigranov (his book on Wagner). But we met only once. And then I was in trouble and I could not attentively listen or look at him. Of him I could

say that "perhaps he was more gifted than myself." . . .

Stolpner was *very wise*, and in *individual* judgments stronger than myself; but on the whole he was not stronger than I. . . .

Yes. . . . I also felt Konstantin Leontiev (my correspondence with him) stronger than myself.

But over all those enumerated I had the advantage of cunning (the Russian "keep your own council"), and perhaps because of that I was not wasted (in a literary sense), as those unfortunate people ("failures") were. From my childhood, from my frightened and harassed childhood, I have adopted the practice of keeping silent (and of ever thinking). I kept on being silent . . . and kept on listening to . . . and thinking. . . . And listening to fools, and to the words of the wise. . . . And it went on ripening in me, slowly and quietly. . . . I did not hurry anywhere. And through that unhurriedness, whilst with them everything "broke off" or "did not ripen," with me it did not break off, and, I think, did ripen. Compared with Rzy and Shperk how extensively has my literary activity unfolded itself, what a number of books I have published. . . . But throughout my life no Press opinions, no dithyrambs (in the Press) gave me that quiet, just pride as the friendship and (I felt it) the respect (and from Shperk also love) of these three men.

But what a destiny is that of a literary man: why are they so unknown, rejected, forgotten?

Shperk, as though anticipating his fate, used to say: "Have you read Gruber (I believe)? You haven't? I am awfully keen on finding something by him. I am generally fascinated by unknown writers, by those who remained unnoticed. What sort of men were they? I am so delighted when I

find in them an idea unusual and before its time." How simple, profound, and charming this is!

I also remember his aphorism about children: " Children differ from us in this that they apprehend everything with a power of realism which is unknown to grown-up people. To us a ' chair ' is a detail of ' furniture.' But a child does not know the category ' furniture '; and to it a ' chair ' is huge and alive as it can't be to us. That is why children *enjoy things* much more than we do." . . .

Another wonderful opinion: " The rule that *children should respect their parents, and the parents should love their children* ought to be reversed: it is the parents who must *respect the children*—respect their peculiar little world and their ardent nature ready to feel hurt at any moment. But children ought only to *love* their parents, and they will love them certainly, as soon as they feel that respect is paid to themselves."

How profound and how new.

Tolstoy. . . . When I spoke to him, among other things, about marriage and the family, about sex—I saw that he was muddled in all that like a schoolboy who is not sure of his spelling; and that, essentially, he did not understand anything in all that except that " one must abstain." He did not know even how to disentangle that little thread—" abstain "—from the fabric into which it is woven. No analysis, no ability to combine, nor even *thought*; mere exclamations. One can't react to that, it is something *imbecile*. . . .

In Soloviov only this is interesting that " a little devil was sitting on his shoulder " (in the Baltic Sea). That was worth while speaking of. Mysterious and *profound* is his nostalgia; that *of which he kept silent*. But his words, what he has *written*—is the most ordinary journalese.

He carried his *pride* before him. And it was *nothing*. The best in him, *his sadness*, on that he kept silent.

Pobedonoszev was a splendid man; but he has not revealed in anything that he had a splendid, *distinctive Russian mind*. He was so ordinary that he has not worn out his professorship.

In respect of Pobedonoszev I feel a guilt: I ought not to have written evil of him after his death. Although objectively I was correct in what I wrote, but in writing like that I was not noble.

Rachinsky's was a dry and *accurate* mind, without anything new or original.

* * *

. . . and essentially—God! God!—there always was a monastery in my soul.

* * *

Did I really need the market place?
Brrr. . . .

* * *

Ah, people—enjoy each evening which falls out bright. Life passes quickly; it will pass and then you will say: " I would enjoy," but it is no longer possible: there is pain, there is sadness, there's no time! Numismatics—well, engage in your numismatics; a book—all right, let it be a book.

But only write nothing, do not " try ": you will miss life, and what you have written will turn out " folly " and " unwanted."

* * *

My head is rocking in the sky.
But how weak my legs are.

* * *

In *many respects* I understand paganism, Judaism, and Christianity more fully, more *to the core* than they were understood in the classical time of their bloom by their own adherents.

And, yet, I am only an " ordinary man of the passing day," with all his weaknesses, with all his great anti-historic " I don't want to." . . .

But there is here a dialectical mystery: " my to-day's day," to which I cling with such a force, as no one I think has had *before me*, gave me all the force and all the penetration. So that " out of weakness issued strength," and from " that strength there issued weakness."

* * *

This generation not only lacks great importance, but has absolutely no importance. Sixty years will pass, " a single breath of history," and there will remain of it no more than of the mummies of the time of Sesostris. What do we know of the men of the twenties (of last century)? Only what Pushkin has told us. Now, *his* every line we know, remember, ponder over it. And his " contemporaries " existed only for their own time, but to us they just do not exist at all. Hence the conclusion: live and work as *though there was nobody*, as though you had no " contemporaries " at all. And if your work and thoughts are valuable they will overcome all that hates you, despises, tries to trample you down. The strongest is the strongest, and the weakest is the weakest. My (" Friend's ") mother used to say: " truth is brighter than the sun."

And live for its sake: as to people—let them go where they like.

* * *

"What do you love then, queer fellow?" My dreams.

(*In a railway station, about myself.*)

* * *

This is what I utterly and finally do not know: "am I something or nothing?" A vapour puffs me up and then it seems that I am "something." But . . . "When the long scroll is unrolled" (Pushkin), then it appears I am "nothing."

(*Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

"Why are you thinking of yourself? You'd better think of others."

No, thank you.

(*Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Yes, perhaps the "plan of the building" is not correct, but it keeps us from the rain, from the mud; and how can we *start pulling it down*?

(*In a railway carriage, about the Church.*)

* * *

When I am at the doctor's I always sit on the edge of the chair, and mentally whisper: "would not you like to pull my ears, please do"; or "would not you like to punch my head, please, please do so, I can stand it, even enjoy it; only after this try to cure her." For some reason I have a notion that all diseases are incurable; and that is why I was always afraid to call in a doctor. A temperature of 104, delirious—"well, it is nothing, it's a cold, five grains of aspirin, a rubbing with vinegar, a purge," any "domestic remedy" as a matter of fact, and "it will pass." But "calling in a doctor"—that's already a *disease*,

and always the idea with me is that " it is incurable." And at Doctor Renteln's, before my wife's third operation, I only bent my body to give myself the appearance of sitting, quite close to the door, but I did not even touch the seat. He spoke slowly:

" It is a fistula . . . and the cervix of the uterus has to be cut off. . . . The uterus has to be made smaller, cleaned " (by cutting? !!).

But, my God; *cancer* always appears on the " cervix of the uterus," and if it is to be cut off, then it is cancer. . . .

How I managed to drag myself home then, I don't remember. . . .

* * *

And now life has completely gone. . . . There remain several gloomy years, old, painful, unnecessary. . . .

How everything is becoming unnecessary. This is the chief sensation of old age. Particularly—things, objects: clothes, furniture, establishments.

What then is the sum total of life?

Terribly little meaning. I lived, once upon a time I was *happy*: that's the chief thing. " And what has come of it? " Nothing particular. And it is not particularly *necessary* that anything should " come of it." Obscurity—is almost the most desirable.

* * *

What is the very best in one's past and in the past of long ago? One's good or moderately good act. And also—a good meeting: *i.e.*, getting to know a nice, congenial, dear man. This indeed, in old age, flashes out like a bright, bright gleam, and one looks with such comfort at these gleams, alas, so few.

But noisy pleasures—so-called "enjoyments"? They were pleasant only at the moment of receiving them, and have no importance for "after times."

Only in old age one realizes that "I ought to have lived well." In youth this does not even occur to one's mind. Nor does it occur in maturity. But in old age the recollection of a good act, of a kind relationship, of a sensitive regard—is the only "bright guest in the room" (in the soul).

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

What is precious then in Russia apart from the old churches? Surely not government offices? Not editorial rooms? But the church is old, very old, and the sexton—he "is not up to much," we are all weak, all little sinners. But *only here is it warm. Why then is it warm here while it is cold everywhere else? Here* they buried my mother, my little brothers; they will bury me here; here my children will get married; everything is *here*. . . . All that *is important*. . . . And people have breathed in *their warmth here*.

* * *

In "my Friend" God has granted me to meet a person whom I never doubted, in whom I was never disappointed. *It is curious*, however, that not a day passed in which one of us did not "shout" at the other. But never did our difference last longer than the evening. Usually I or she came up in half an hour's time with an apology for the rudeness (shouting).

Never, never was there between us anger or disrespect.

Never!!! And not for a single *whole* day. Not once during twenty years did our day end "in division." . . .

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

Still, dark nights. . . .
The terror of crime. . . .
The anguish of loneliness. . . .
Tears of despair, of fear, and of the sweat of labour. . . .
Here thou art, religion. . . .
Help to the drooping. . . .
Help to the tired.
Faith of the sick. . . .
Here are thy roots, religion. . . .
Eternal, miraculous roots.

(*Correcting the proofs of an article.*)

* * *

"It has all happened because of the placenta," said Doctor Chernval. And this occurred when she was seventeen and a half, while in *these matters* she is even now, at the age of forty-seven, a mere child. "Why is my arm stiff?"—and no other anxiety except the arm. The doctor said laughingly: "She is most worried about her arm. But it does not matter, does it, it is the *left* arm which is stiff." . . .

And he smoked his cigarette thoughtfully.

* * *

My soul is aching, my soul is aching, my soul is aching.

And what to do with that pain—I don't know.

But only *with the pain* I can go on living. . . . This is the dearest to me and within me.

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

About three years before 1911 my nameless and faithful " Friend," to whom I owe everything, said:

" I feel I shall not live very long now. Let us live these few years well." . . .

My heart sank within me. Hardly audibly I said: " certainly, certainly! "

But that " certainly " was not actually realized.

* * *

Your Mother
(to our children).

" I had my plait cut off, for I do not need it."

A wonderful, chestnut-coloured plait. Now her hair sticks out like a mouse's tail.

" Why did you do it? Without asking me! I am *hurt*. It is as though you have *thrown away something of yourself*, and a something *which made others happy*."

" I've lost everything. What do I need the plait for? Where's my neck? Where are my arms? There's nothing left. And so I rid myself of the plait."

(*On sacrament day, late in the evening.*)

* * *

But to me it seemed, as everything seems to me now, a sort of premonition of death.

(*Feb.* 25, 1911.)

* * *

At the age of fifty-six I possess 35,000 roubles. But " my Friend " is ill. . . . And I want nothing.

* * *

Her " friend " after all was only *myself*: in me alone tears are flowing, flowing, and can't stop. . . .

The children. . . . How little they need their parents when they themselves are growing up: their chums, their own life, their future—it all excites them so much. . . .

ROZANOV

When my mother died I merely realized that I could smoke cigarettes openly. And I lighted a cigarette at once. I was thirteen.

* * *

For twenty years like " a fresh purling rivulet " I have been running round a coffin. . . .

And used to get into a temper: why is there no merriment going, why are not flowers blooming. And to learn it all so very late. . . .

* * *

. . . Yes, I've attained " fame." . . . Oh, how I long to tear with my teeth, to scratch with my nails that fame, to set my last, rotten tooth into it. . . .

And it is all too late. . . .

Oh, how I should like to live again, with the sole object—*of not writing anything*.

Those columns—they have robbed me of everything; they have taken me away from " my Friend," for whose sake I ought to have lived, have wished to live, and do wish to live.

And my " talent " drove me on all the while to write and write.

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

And my rambler keeps on rambling on the stairs, advancing with her right leg only; because of the bend in the stairs she does not see me, but I see her: her face is flushed and with animation she is saying to the maid who supports her: " To-day I have to take a hundred roubles to pay the doctor. I've completely robbed my Vasili Vasilievich." " Completely robbed," I laugh from the top of the stairs, running down. " What hundred roubles are you speaking of? It is I who am going to pay the doctor, and not to-day, but some day this week."

But she has only this worry, which she meets seven days ahead, that a lot of money is being spent on her illness. She laughs, and we merrily and painfully enter the hall. Ah, my rambler, my dear rambler: for a firm walk I would give thousands . . . and for complete *health* I would give *all*.

* * *

Terrible loneliness throughout life. From childhood. Lonely souls are hidden souls. And this hiding springs from viciousness. The terrible burden of loneliness. Is it not that one's pain is due to this?

Not only to this.

* * *

On 27 November, at the age of eighty-five, died, in Eletz, "our granny," Alexandra Andrianovna Rudnev, *née* Zhdanov. For full seventy years she had borne labour for others—having made up her mind at the age of fifteen to a marriage which would be advantageous to a young brother under her care. Both were complete orphans. And ever since she, always merry, only "running to Church," teaching the little children of the locality "to read and write, to serve God, the Tsar, and the country," like the undying candle of the catacombs, lighted, warmed, fondled, laboured, cried—cried a great deal—and only with the "Church service" did she dry her eyes (consolation). Let this book be dedicated to her; and *along with her*—to my poor mother, Nadezhda Vasilievna Rozanov.

* * *

She was quite different. All tormented—by helplessness, by a whirl of confused feelings. . . . But she did not know that, when she used to get out quietly from her bed, where I slept with her (about the age

of six—seven—eight), I was not yet asleep and heard her pray for us all, silently; then her whisper would be heard . . . louder, louder . . . until exclamations would burst out in a sort of (slight) hiss.

And in daytime she was again stern and always stern. Throughout our house I never remember a smile.

* * *

Distractingly, but not loudly, the ventilator hums in the passage; I (almost) cried: "Just to hear it I want to live longer, and above all 'my Friend' must live longer." Then came the idea: "won't she ('my Friend') hear the ventilator in the other world"; and a longing for immortality seized me so keenly by the hair that I nearly dropped down on the floor.

(*Late at night.*)

* * *

The goodness of our clergy! What a lot of tricks I played on them. And yet *those who knew me*, and *many* even who did *not know me*, behaved towards me, rejecting my ideas, fighting against them in the Press and orally—not only kindly, but also lovingly. (Ustiynsky, Filevsky, Lebedev—the censor, Pobedonoszev, S. M. Soloviov, Father Drosdov, Akimov, Zelikov, Professor Glubovsky, Mmes. N. R. Scherbov and A. A. Albov.) The exception was only S. A. Rachinsky, he alone got "to hate his brother" (after my articles on marriage in *The Russky Troud* and in *The St. Petersburg Vedomosti*. Again: Father Hermogines who in the summer demanded that I should be excommunicated, in November and December asked *twice* to meet me. The Archbishop Sergius (of Finland) who knew (from a letter of mine sent him by Fiodorov) "of my revolting ideas," nevertheless,

when " my Friend " was lying ill in the Evangelical Hospital after the third operation, came to visit her, and came by the request of the Metropolitan Antonius, *who had never seen her*, and who has met me only twice or three times—and not at all on intimate terms. And delicacy everywhere, refinement everywhere: and this after my *terrible hostility* towards them, after my perfectly *intolerable accusations*. But now take laymen: what abuses did they not shower on me (" he's a Peredonov," " a trickster," " one can't sit with him at the same table and work," etc., etc.), when I only quite gently stroked them (their party) the wrong way. From this I realized how much *warmer* the Church is than worldly people *en masse*: sincerer, heartier, more placable, more forgiving. And if there was fire there (the inquisition), yet it was not the stake of the positivists: cold, and with *cold iron*. . . .

And I threw myself on the Church (1911, the end): the Church: the only *warm*, the *last warm* place on earth. . . .

Here is my biography and destiny.

(*Dec.* 9, 1911.)

* * *

P.S.—A *religious* man is above a sage, above a poet, above a conqueror and orator. He who prays will conquer all, and saints will be the conquerors of the world.

I am returning to the Church! I am returning! I am returning.

(*Dec.* 9, 1911.)

P.P.S.—Never shall my foot be on the same floor with positivists—never! Never! And never will I breathe the same air with them in one room!

P.P.P.S.—Better superstition, better silliness, better

ignorance, but *with prayer*. Religion, or nothing. It is the struggle and the cross, the staff and the stick, the spear and the grave.

But I believe the saints will conquer.

P.P.P.P.S.—The best people whom I have met, nay, whom I *have discovered* in life: my "Friend," the great "granny," "uncle," Mme. N. R. Scherbov, Mme. A. A. Albov, Father Oustyinsky—all of them were *religious*; the most profound intellects—Florensky and Rzy—are religious. Surely this must mean something. My choice is made.

Prayer—or nothing.

Or:

Prayer—and play.

Prayer—and feasts.

Prayer—and dances.

But in the core of everything—prayer.

If there is a "praying man"—everything is permissible.

If he is not—nothing is permissible.

That is my credo—and may I go down with it to the grave.

I shall begin the great dance of prayer. With long trumpets, with music, with everything: and *everything* will be permissible, for everything will be forgiven through prayer. We shall do everything, because after all that we shall *bow to God*. But we shall not do what is superfluous, nothing "Karamazovian": for even in our dances we shall remember God and shall not want to grieve him.

"God is with us"—that is eternal.

* * *

Traffic, traffic everywhere, in literature, in politics—traffic in *fame*; traffic in *money*; and yet the priests are criticized for "selling wax candles" and "church

oil." But their "trade" forms only one-tenth and they are not enlightened, while the laymen's trade forms nine-tenths, despite their being "enlightened."

(*Dec.* 13, 1911.)

* * *

Why am I so angry with the radicals?
I don't know myself.
Do I love the conservatives?
No.
What's the matter with me? I don't know. I can't make it out.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

On August 26, 1910, I became old all at once.
For twenty years I had stood in the "sunlight." And all of a sudden it was nine o'clock at night.
Now I want nothing, long for nothing. Only the grave is in my mind.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

No interest whatever in the future.
For no interest will be shared by "my Friend." An interest is possible for "a couple"; for *one*—there is no interest.
For *one* there's only the grave.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

Indeed, I am too monstrously lazy to read. For instance, of Filosopov's article about me (in the Annual) I've read only the first page; and only this year, looking through my books (to dust them, to arrange them) I came across that book, opened it and read the end of the article, without getting up from the floor (he says many true things there). But why, I ask myself, do I read so little?

A thousand reasons; yet the main reason is this: reading prevents me from thinking. My head is essentially "dizzy," and I have not the power to escape from that dizziness.

I greedily (madly) read when at school; but even at the University I never went further than the beginning of a book (Mommsen, Bluntschli).

Essentially I was born a pilgrim—a pilgrim-preacher. So in Judea a whole street used to start prophesying. Now I am *one* of those; *i.e.*, of the men in *the street* (average men) and yet "a prophet" (without the mission to change, for instance, the destiny of the people). Prophecy in my case has no reference to Russians, I mean, it is not a circumstance in our people's history; but is my *private* concern, and it refers only to myself (having no significance or influence); it is a detail of my biography.

I decidedly cannot stop, cannot abstain from speech (writing): and all which prevents me from doing so I impatiently brush aside (business matters), or I let it drop from my hands (books).

This speech (whispering) constitutes my "literature." Hence so many mistakes: to go up to a book and to open it with the idea of consulting it is much more difficult for me than to write an article. "Writing" is pleasure, but "consulting" is disgusting to me. In the former case my "wings soar up," in the latter—I must work; and I am an eternal idler.

And I found comfort in this acknowledged position, to which all have given their consent: that "the world, on the whole, is my conception." According to that premise I am not at all bound to "make certain "and to write history and geography correctly but to write "as I conceive it." If there had been no

Schopenhauer, I should perhaps feel ashamed; but as there is Schopenhauer I am " all right."

Of Schopenhauer (Strakhov's translation) I have read only the first half of the first page (having paid three roubles for the copy); but there on the first line it says: The World as my Conception.

" That's fine," I thought idly. Let us " conceive " that it is very difficult to read on any further, and for me altogether unnecessary.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

The grave . . . do you know that its meaning will conquer a whole civilization. . . .

That is, here is a plain . . . a field, no one and nothing there. . . . Save a little mound of earth, under which a man is buried. And these two words: " man buried," " man died," with their overwhelming meaning, with their great meaning, with their mournful meaning . . . overcome whole planets—and are more important than all the Atillas and their historians.

Those were just trampling over one spot. . . . But a man has died, and we don't even know—*who*: this is so terribly sad, desperate . . . that our whole idea of civilization is as it were tumbling down, and we don't want " Atillas and their historians," but only to sit down on the little mound (on the grave) and to howl on it humbly, like a dog. . . .

Oh, it is here that *pride* vanishes.

A cursed quality.

It is not for nothing that I have always hated thee.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

An expensive coffin was being carried along and the crowd stepped over " puddles " and over the

flowers, which dropped from the hearse: the mourners were being hurried and jolted along. And I, driving by in a cab and also being jolted, thought: "this is how they will carry you too, Vasili." I vividly imagined my rather stupid face, pale then (now it is always red), and parched lips, and my little beard with its miserable hair, and the public trying to "avoid the puddles," and cursing when they stepped into them; and one of them is dreadfully upset because he cannot smoke; and I from my coffin sympathize awfully with him for not "being allowed" to smoke; and if the service had not been held on me and were it not such an official moment when "I am obliged to lie down," I would quietly push a cigarette into his hand.

I know from personal experience that it is just at a funeral that one wants to smoke so dreadfully. . . .

And the hearse went on, went on for a long time. "Well, good-bye, Vasili; it is rotten, old boy, in the earth; and you lived rottenly, old boy. It would be easier for you to lie in the earth if you had lived better. And this in a *state of iniquity* too." . . .

Lord, how can I die in a *state of iniquity*. . . .

And I am in a state of iniquity.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

Yes: perhaps we live all our life long in order to *be worthy of the grave*. But we become aware of this only when approaching the grave: before "it never even occurs to us."

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

Sixty times only, in the luckiest possible case, could I have stood "with candles" through the all night service of Christmas: how could I miss then even *one* Christmas?!!

Also: sixty Easters!!! So few. Only sixty Christmases!!! How then could even one be missed?!!

This is the reason for " going to Church " and for a " regular course of life," with parents, with a wife, with children.

I am fifty-six; and I have hardly stood twelve times " with the candles."

And it is all too late now: I am fifty-six!

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

How hollow is my rebellion against Christianity: I ought to have lived a good life, and I had been given (for twenty years) very favourable conditions. But I spoilt everything with my " works." A miserable writer, not needed by anyone—and it serves me right that I am not needed.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

The Church is the only poetic, the only profound thing on earth. God, what madness it was that for eleven years I made every possible effort to destroy the Church.

And how fortunate that I failed.

What would the *earth* be like without the Church? It would suddenly lose its meaning and get cold.

Chinizelli's Circus, the Little Theatre, the Moscow Art Theatre, the daily newspaper *Ryech*, meetings and their orators, " one could flirt with an actress," one died, the other was born, and we all " drink tea ": and I actually could think that that was enough. Directly I did not think so, but indirectly I did.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

Let God give me another three, or four, or five years (and "her" too): I will light my "Church candle" and will not drop it out of my hands until I reach the grave. My former life was madness; not for nothing did "my Friend" object so much to my friendship with the decadents. Empty people; without meaning; not needed by Russia. "May the fame of authors blow on them." A few of them may be talented, but it is no matter. It is no matter from the point of view of Kostroma, of Yeletz, of what is concrete, vital. I ought to have been with Peredolsky, with Titov, Maksimov: those were men, those were Russians. But "poems" will vanish, even before the paper rots away.

(*Dec.* 14, 1911.)

* * *

Carry on, carry on, dear fellows: there is no help, I am dead. Don't jolt me very much. Still, never mind if you do. I have been jolted all my life long. I should like to smoke, but it is rather inconvenient: an official situation. A corpse in his coffin must lie "at attention." I have been standing "at attention" all my life long (the devil knows before whom). Dig me in quickly please, and go to the devil with your officialism. I am bound to crumple my shroud in the earth and kick out my knee. They will say to me: "Come along to the last judgment." And I shall say: "I won't go." "Why, are you afraid?" "Not in the least, but I simply don't want to go. I want to smoke a cigarette. Give me a coal from hell to light a cigarette." "Have you got Stamboli's cigarettes?" "Certainly, Stamboli's." "Here they smoke mostly Asmolov's. A national tobacco."

(*Dec.* 15, 1911.)

* * *

"Well, and would not you like to have a few girls?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"What a reputation they have given me: even 'there' (on earth) if I did indulge in that way, I did it really for the sake of 'experiments.' I mean, I observed and studied. But that I did it 'for my own pleasure' was hardly the case."

"Well, and what is the conclusion?"

"The conversation has nothing to do with this department. Change the subject."

(*Dec.* 16, 1911.)

* * *

For the last year and a half I have been half-alive. Depressing, sad. Terrible. For several months I have not got out my coins (to look at them). Am only making a weekly fifty or eighty roubles: but no interest whatever in what I write.

(*Dec.* 16, 1911.)

* * *

The Press. The Press is a machine-gun fired by an idiotic non-com. And what a number of Don Quixotes he will have killed before they get at him. Or perhaps they will *never* get at him.

Finis and the grave.

(*Dec.* 16, 1911.)

* * *

"Social ideals!" they are shouting all round; "the emergence of the social element in literature," "the awakening of the social interest."

Perhaps I understand nothing: but when I meet a man with "a social interest," it is not that I am bored, it is not that I bear ill-will towards him, but in his company I am simply dying. "I feel wet all

over " and melted away: neither mind, nor will, nor words, nor soul.

I am dead.

And I awake, and open my eyes, when I guess or suspect that " social interest " has jumped out of the man (my neighbour, fellow-man).

At school when I wanted to punch someone's head, or to trick someone—I wanted it without any " social interest," but simply because I felt sad and things were uncomfortable.

And a " social order " I wanted without any " social interest," but merely: " we shall move into another street " and " I shall provide myself with a girl " (when at school I always longed for a girl).

Why then am I so stifled when people talk of " social interest." It is as though they were talking about the migration of jackdaws. " They fled to the north," " they fled to the south."

" Oh, do fly, dears, wherever you like; I don't want to know."

Or: " Men march to their goals "; but I know that a " march " is conditioned by the *road*, and not by the men *who* march. And that's why these little jackdaws are so boring.

And again—I can't bear the mere noise. And where there are jackdaws there is always a noise.

(*Dec.* 18, 1911.)

* * *

How God loves me that he has given " her " to me.

(*Dec.* 19, 1911.)

* * *

Life is setting, setting. And this setting can't be arrested. And I have no desire to arrest it.

How everything has changed *in meaning* in accordance with this *situation.*

I no longer want merriment, pleasures. Oh, not in the least. An *hour* has come in which virtue is sweeter than enjoyment. I never thought it, never supposed it.

(*Dec.* 21, 1911.)

* * *

I've finished the Christmas article. "My Friend" has fallen asleep. . . . Past four in the morning. And there is Good Friday in my soul.

(*Dec.* 23, 1911.)

* * *

If anyone will say a word of praise at my open grave, I'll get out of my coffin and smack his face.

(*Dec.* 28, 1911.)

* * *

No man is worthy of praise. Every man is only worthy of compassion.

(*Dec.* 29, 1911.)

* *

FROM THE APOCALYPSE OF OUR TIMES

Of this work only numbers 8-9 *are translated here.*

THE APOCALYPSE OF OUR TIMES

A Christian

IT is as though he is ill and suspects everyone of being stricken with even worse diseases than himself. Only of one thing, of power, he feels no suspicion. Power is always good, blessed, and this is exclusively because he is lazy, and power promises to handle him like a cripple.

Charity, which everywhere exists to fill up a gap, is with Christians a normal state. All are engaged in charity towards the "poor brethren," and poverty of possessions, of body and spirit, is Christianity. "Anaemic people."

When the Slavs called the Varyags from over the sea to come and rule over them, to rule over their rich and vast land, they showed themselves to be cripples even before they were born. Terrible.

Terrible and true. And up to now, up to our days I have observed that all fine estates, rounded off and conveniently situated, are in the hands of Germans or Jews. "Stoll's Villa," "Winkler's estate." For 15,000 roubles Stoll bought forests and lands around three huge lakes, and seven years later he was offered 120,000; but he refused to sell. He knew that his grandson would get a million for the estate. It's precisely like the "history of the Varyags." There is no doubt that he bought the estate from a Russian squire, who had to provide for his kitchen-maid and her offspring. "She won't need more than 15,000. Therefore I, too, need no more. I'll end my days with her. And now and then she'll

allow me to have a little game at cards." A poetical nation. An artistic nation. It is anecdotic.

And that's how we live. But let us return to Christians. There is not a clear, kind, happy eye. Everyone scrutinizing everyone else, everyone suspecting everyone else. Everyone gossiping of everyone else. "Christian literature" is almost the "history of Christian gossip." Look at our fiction; at the theatre. It is almost an out-and-out slander.

How very terrible. And how still more terrible to love it all. I groan and love, I moan and love. It's habit, tradition. Oh, my poor dears.

La Divina Comedia

With a clang, thud, and bang the iron curtain is dropping down on Russian history.

The performance is over.

The public gets up.

"It's time to put on our overcoats and go home."

They look round.

But there are neither overcoats to put on, nor houses to go to.

Odd

There are so many parables in the Gospels, but where is there a prayer, a hymn, or a psalm? And for some reason Christ never once took into his hands a harp, a pipe, a zither, and never once "cried out." Why did not He teach people to pray, having destroyed both the cult and the Temple? Of the Temple He clearly said that it would be destroyed; just as of Jerusalem He authoritatively foretold that it would fall and be ruined. There was going to be destroyed a centre of prayer and prayerfulness, such as certainly had never yet been anywhere else on earth. For some mysterious and

inscrutable reason it has never occurred to people that the Evangel is a religiously-*cold* book, not to say a religiously-*indifferent* book. A book in which there are no songs, no joys, no ecstasies, no looking up to heaven; and in which generally there is " the least likeness to the paradise of the first men." It has never occurred to anyone that, if the Evangel surprises and strikes one most, it is by its religious *sobriety*, a *sobriety* akin to rationalism, where its " vapours " go neither upwards nor downwards. Parable after parable—the parable of the sower sowing in the field—it is all as it were ready made for Professor Harnack and for Father Petrov: a story from " everyday " life, with an edifying common " moral." . . . You may add Farraria to Professor Harnack—but where is religion here? Where is *it*, the psalm, the essence of the matter? And the king, *irresistibly singing to God*?

" As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God! "

On the great expanse of the Evangel there is only one prayer of seven lines. And how orderly and consecutive it all is. It is logic, not prayer; reminders of this and that, but no exaltation, not an iota of ecstasy. It is a kind of elongated " twice two = God." There is perhaps only " the prayer of the publican," the great, beautiful, *sole* prayer. But have a good look at it: it is not at all *Christ's prayer*; but a prayer, by chance overheard by the Evangelist —indeed *the prayer of a man and a publican*. Should it not strike everyone that in Christ's prayer, " Our Father," there is less of the *noümenon of prayerfulness* than in that poor fellow's. And, on the whole, we do not hear prayers and loving heart-outpourings of Christ to His Father, which would be so natural from the Son, which is so much expected of the Son.

The people pray, but Christ does not pray. Somewhere the Pharisees pray, removed, at a distance, in *an evil shadow*; and this parallel-wise "justifies," as it were, the already predestined destruction of the Temple, and of Jerusalem, and of the whole people of Israel. "*So they prayed, and what could there be expected of such a people?*" Yet *now* we know of Simeon the Just, of Ben-Iochai, of Rabbi Akiba. They prayed not at all like "that." . . . Well, take even Jonah: having found himself in the whale's belly, he rose up to pray and cried out. Surely he was not a Pharisee and did not pray for the sake of Pharisaism. Jonah invisibly and beautifully justifies *also the Pharisee*. The Jews prayed not at all as it is described in the Evangel, and the Evangel contains a slander on the prayers of the Jews. Those hurrying little Jews, just like Simeon and Akiba, ran about, bustled, called out, lifted up their voices at the people, but never "stood up solemnly in an attitude," and did not utter mere words, verily cursed words. The only thing in which they sinned against the Evangel was that they loved their Temple, and the city, and the people. . . .

A strange extinction of prayerfulness. . . . What a lot of travelling is done in the Acts and no prayer from anyone who is starting on a journey, and no prayer from anyone who has safely returned from his journey. And such a bustle withal. One can't help observing chaffingly: "you are bustling too much, Martha, sit you down at the feet of the Heavenly Father." But the Heavenly Father for some mysterious reason does not occur to the mind of any one of them; only the *Son*, everywhere the *Son*, who replaces the Father. . . . Yet what is *prayer* if it is not the overpowering attitude of the child-man towards God? And this indeed has mysteri-

ously vanished. There is only arguing. And it occurs to one that David's harp, Apollo's lyre, and Marsyas' pipe—to take just a glance at the ancient world—have now been replaced by theological discussions. And perhaps the secret noümenon of the Evangel, of the whole Evangelic cause, lay in the replacement of the music of prayer by the " cogito ergo sum " of theology.

Perturbatio Aeterna

" I say unto you: the first shall be last, and the last first."

And the disciples asked Him: " But, Lord, to what *bounds* and unto what appointed times? "

And He said again:

" The first shall be last and the last first."

" But, merciful Master, if it be so, then what kingdom will endure, and what land will remain safe and stable, if everything is to be put upside down and downside up? "

And He said once again:

" The first shall be last and the last first."

The disciples said:

" But if it be not sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, then how will fruit grow if there be not a stable layer of earth, but only the *flashing* of the shovel turning the earth from side to side? "

And He said again:

" Verily, verily I say unto you: the first shall be last and the last first."

And the disciples felt afraid. And turning aside they took council. They shook their heads. And kept silent.

* * *

And then history started to be busy: conspiracies, storms, revolutions. Tossing waves of popular

opinion. And everyone trying to rise to supremacy. And no one able to keep it up for long, but sinking to the bottom.

* * *

Verily: "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the wine of the earth." . . . (Apocalypse.)

And there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. . . .

* * *

"He [Raskolnikov] was laid up in hospital the whole end of Lent and Passion week. Recovering, he remembered the dreams he had had in his fever and delirium. *In his illness he dreamt that the whole world was as it were doomed as a sacrifice to some terrible, unheard-of, and unknown plague, sweeping over Europe from the depths of Asia. Everyone was to be destroyed, with the exception of a few, a few of the elect.* There appeared new trichinae, microscopic beings penetrating the bodies of people. Yet those beings were spirits, endowed with a mind and will. People who absorbed them instantly became mad and raved. But never, never did people consider themselves so understanding and so unshakable in truth as the infected ones considered themselves. They never considered anything more unshakable than their verdicts, their scientific deductions, their moral convictions and beliefs. Whole villages, whole cities and peoples became infected and went mad. All were troubled and did not understand one another; everyone thought that in himself alone was contained the truth, and was tormented when he looked at others, beat his chest, wept, and wrung his hands. People did not know whom and how to judge, they could not agree as to what to consider wrong, what right. They did not know whom to condemn and

whom to acquit. People killed one another in senseless malice. One people rose against another people, armies against armies; but the armies already on the march suddenly began to torment themselves, their lines got disarrayed, the soldiers threw themselves one on another, fought and killed one another, bit and devoured one another. In the cities all day long the alarm sounded: all were summoned to assemble; but who summoned and for what purpose—nobody knew; but all were in anguish. People left their most ordinary occupations, for everyone was proposing his ideas, his corrections; but they could not agree on anything. Work on the land ceased. Here and there people ran together in groups, agreed together on something, vowed never to part—but immediately started on something else than they just recently had agreed on, and they began to accuse one another, they fought and killed one another. Fires began to break out, famine came. Everyone and everything was coming to an end. The plague grew and swept on further and further. In the whole world only a few men could save themselves—those were the pure and elect, destined to start a new race of man and a new life, to renew and purify the earth." (" Crime and Punishment.")

* * *

" And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

" And Jesus said unto them: See you not all these things? Verily I say unto you: There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew xxiv, 1-2.)

* * *

And John asked Him: " Lord, who shall betray

Thee?" And Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot. And after the sop Satan entered into him. And Judas went immediately out to betray him.

* * *

"That ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

"And now you know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed . . . even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (The second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chap. ii, 2-10.)

* * *

"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

"I will make them of the synagogue of Satan,

which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie." (Apocalypse.)

Crushed under the Bookcase

Without moving the bookcase aside it is impossible to save, or rather to rescue from exceeding eternal torment a whole nation—of five, or eight, or ten million—we don't know how many there are of them; and yet *to crush even one man is so terrible*. Lo, he wants to breathe and cannot breathe. "It hurts!" "It hurts!" "It hurts!" And yet who will move the bookcase aside? There is not a single tiny line in the "annals of Christianity" which does not increase the burden of pressure.

Who can move aside St. Augustine? Such a powerful, exceptional mind. And who can move aside John Chrysostom? The very name shows what his words were like. And Paul the apostle? And particularly Christ himself?

Yet the mere fact that there is "a live man under the bookcase" brings a shudder to the heart. "A live man under the bookcase?" "How did he get there?" Well, he's there. And moreover—who? The most beloved son of God, the son who from the beginning of the world, from the creation of the world, has been the most beloved. And never did God turn his face from him, and he never forgot God.

"A man under the bookcase?"—"A man in the sea!"—and the vessel stops to rescue him from the sea. Nets, ropes, safety-belts are thrown out. "He's out! Saved!" And all are glad—"a man is saved." And no one frets because the vessel is delayed and people are kept waiting. Provided the man is saved.

For this alone "the course of the Christian vessel" appears strange: there is "a man in the sea,"

and no one looks back, all have forgotten him. *Man is forgotten.* Oh, oh, oh. . . .

But to start moving the bookcase aside just means to begin again the whole business from the very beginning. "We did not accept Christ, but he is our God." How indeed can we hesitate in accepting Christ?

The whole Christian history has pressed on us and crushed us. So many commentaries. So many "annotations." How can such libraries be moved aside? On the Jews there presses the Imperial Public Library of Petersburg, the British Museum. And in Spain, the University of Salamanca; in Italy, the Ambrosian library of Venice. Lord—all these library cases press on the chest of a little Jew from Shklov. And surely you know how heavy books are.

But the man does not die; he keeps on moaning. Would he did die. Civilization would breathe more freely. For otherwise it is impossible to breathe. Moaning, moaning all the time.

A queer, moaning civilization. Already the evil of Christ's coming is manifest in the fact that there has come a civilization with a moan. Surely he preached the "acceptable year." *In this, at any rate, He was mistaken*: no "acceptable year" arrived, but there came a civilization with a moan.

What "good tiding" is this if "a man is in the sea" and "the bookcase has fallen down on man."

No. In all Christianity, in Christian history—in the way it has followed, in the way its spirituality has developed—there lies some evil. And here "the little flowers" of Francis of Assisi, as well as Anatole France and Renan, are equally powerless.

"Man has been crushed" and I don't want to hear the Imitation of Thomas à Kempis.

THE APOCALYPSE OF OUR TIMES

Three Horoscopes

Is there a connection between the planet and man inhabiting it? And generally "of what does the burning sun speak?" . . . "What is there in the stars?" Do the stars whisper? Or do they, dully and emptily, like empty pots, move according to Copernicus?

The horoscopes spoke of all that. "The silly knowledge of antiquity," to which, under the new science, no attention whatever is paid. But the new science did not predict the present war even a few months ahead. And, in a word, Comte's *savoir pour prévoir*—just in its Comtism, just in its positivism—has come a complete cropper. . . .

What are "horoscopes"? What are they? The demon? God? But even Christians, at any rate in villages, "believe in fate"? That is, they believe in the mysterious power of the stars. And it is astonishing that none of the historians has paid any attention to the three astounding "horoscopes," *i.e.*, the "commands of the stars" which *have already been fulfilled*; and how well we know those horoscopes from history, and how the historians tell of them in the minutest detail. Loudly. Distinctly. For the whole world to hear.

One horoscope is that of Jesus Christ.

The other horoscope is that of Paul the Apostle.

The third horoscope of Constantine the Great.

One was crucified.

The other was also crucified, but with his head downwards.

The third, Constantine the Great, executed his son, whom he suspected of an intrigue with Fausta, his step-mother. That son was Crispus. And the wife, whom he evidently loved, he burnt in a red-hot bath.

Dostoevsky, in a certain passage, observes that "the planet did not spare its Creator." . . . Oh, oh, oh! . . . Well now, is *the earth evil*? But he himself speaks of the glorious "white earth," of the "blessed earth." Did not he himself say "the holy land of Russia"? This, too, is a planet, a part of the planet. Why, whatever may be said, the planet itself is white, pure, right. And we must believe in it. Just simply believe. And for Him and for them that "believed" planet (according to Dostoevsky) has composed such terrible horoscopes, *horoscopes unexampled in history, soul-freezing*. . . .

Oh, moans. . . .

Moans, moans, moans. . . .

But how truly there is contained in it, like a roaring maelstrom, the greatest vortex of the ocean, the roar of the Apocalypse!

"They call themselves apostles, and are the offspring of Satan. They say they are the church, but are the synagogue of Satan." . . .

Oh, oh, oh. . . .

Terrors, terrors. . . .

The noümena of the planet.

And the foundations of the earth shook. (The gospel account of the moment of Christ's crucifixion.)

"And he went down into the abyss." . . . Terrible, terrible. . . .

How shattered is the planet! And, earth, where are thy fragments?

Horoscopes, horoscopes, horoscopes. Oh, how terrible are their predictions. Is it indeed the whisper of the stars? Run, historians, shut your ears.

"Blessed are the ears which have not heard anything of the history of man."

THE APOCALYPSE OF OUR TIMES

On the Passions of the World

The earthly life here already contains the roots of life unearthly. As the poet says:

There is exhilaration in *fight*. . . .

These are Mars and Ares, the deities of Mars and Ares; they are like gods. . . .

And on the verge of the dark abyss,
And in the roaring of the hurricane,
And in the wafting of the plague . . .
The pledge may be of immortality. (Pushkin.)

What a thought, what a thought flashed, *intuitively*, through Pushkin's mind! Just so, "the pledge of immortality and life eternal." This is the Hades and Eleusis of antiquity: and how can we help not believing in them and in their *reality*, if the thought of Pushkin, the Christian, of Pushkin, the poet—who at the moment of writing his poem was not thinking of the ancients—suddenly and unexpectedly, suddenly and unconsciously, suddenly and irresistibly approached the Greeks, the Romans, Tartarus, the ideas of Hesiod and of Homer. . . .

* * *

Similarly I thought of nothing when looking at a caterpillar, a chrysalis, and a butterfly, which I saw, on one hand, with one part of my being; but on the other hand I saw them as clearly, as distinctly, and not with *one* part of my being only.

Then, coming in to my friends who were staying with me, Professor Kapterev, the naturalist, and Florensky, the priest, I asked them:

"I say, in a caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly—which is the 'I'?"

I.e., the "I," as it were one letter, one scintillation, one ray.

Kapterev was silent; but Florensky, having thought for a moment, said: " Surely, the butterfly is the entelechy of the caterpillar and chrysalis."

" Entelechy " is an Aristotelian term, and one of the most famous terms which he himself thought out and composed philologically. A certain mediaeval schoolman sold his soul to the devil so that the latter might even in a dream explain to him what precisely Aristotle meant by " entelechy." But, among other sayings, there is also this of Aristotle's: " the soul is the entelechy of the body." Then it became suddenly clear to me—from Florensky's answer (and what else could Florensky have said, if not *this*?)—that the " butterfly " is *really*, mysteriously, and metaphysically, the soul of the caterpillar and chrysalis.

Thus happened this, cosmogonically overwhelming, discovery. It may be said that the three of us *discovered* the soul of insects before it was discovered and *proved* in man.

Now let us see " what is it doing "?

" It gathers nectar," " it rummages among flowers." This is rather suspicious and *reprehensible*. But, actually, a butterfly has no *mouth*, nothing to drink with or to take in solid food. Kapterev, as a naturalist, said then: " they (he did not say *all of them*) have no intestines." Does it mean then that they have *not a stomach either*? Certainly! What a strange . . . being, existence? " It does not eat." Do they live for a long time? There are flies—*ephemerides*. And at any rate they, and beyond any doubt, all of them *copulate*. It means then the " world of the future age " is pre-eminently determined by " copulation "; and then light is thrown on its irresistibility, on its insatiability, and—" alas! " or " not alas! "—on its " sacredness," and that it is a

" mystery " (the mystery of marriage). The further, the more discoveries. But it is obvious that in insects, cows, everywhere in the animal and vegetable world, and not only in man alone, it is a " mystery, heavenly and sacred." And, indeed, it is so, in its central point, *in copulation.* Then we understand " the shame that attaches to sexual organs ": it is the " life of the future age," through which we enter into " life beyond the grave," into " life of the future age."

And, strangely, then becomes understandable also the *joy.* " Eden, bliss." Yet, more than this: let us examine the " nectar of flowers." Indeed, this particularly is amazing that insects (not butterflies only, but scarabs, beetles, ladybirds, etc.) rummage in the huge—as compared with their own size—sexual organs of trees, and particularly of bushes, roses, etc., oleanders and such like, orchids. *How do flowers appear to the butterflies?* This is what we must understand, and the *understanding of which is noümenally essential.* It is not impossible that to each insect there appears a " tree and flower." A garden and flowers are imagined as " paradise." . . . And so indeed it is: " summer, warmth, and the sun, into the rays of which they fly; and from the flowers they ' gather nectar.' " Then we can't help seeing the association of " nectar and the soul," and that the soul is for the nectar, and the nectar for the soul. Again, there is the myth: " the gods on Olympus feed on nectar and ambrosia." But previous to the myth and parallel to it: what a flood of light is poured on " why do flowers smell," and why the flowers of plants are so huge that a whole insect can " enter into them." It is perfectly evident that the bigness of the flowers is just designed to allow the insect to enter *entire.* Then we can accept the idea that

"plants hear and think" (as in the tales of antiquity), and that they " have a soul "!! Oh, what a soul! . . . But what is still more interesting that a " garden," any garden generally, "ours and earthly" is yet somehow not "ours" and not " earthly," but also of the future, of " life beyond the grave." . . . Then we can understand " *winter* and summer," since *out of the winter and through the winter*, having lain in the earth throughout the winter, the " seed rises from the grave." Essentially, in accordance with the same law, as does the " chrysalis " of the butterfly.

Thus " our fields " are " fields beyond the grave," " meadows of the life to come."

> When the yellowing field is stirring . . .
> Then in the skies I see God. . . .

We understand then the peculiar and agitating feeling, experienced by man in a garden, experienced by us in a field, experienced by us in a forest—which, from a rationalist point of view, is *utterly inexplicable*. We understand why Antaeus, in touching mother-earth, recovers his former strength. A great many stories of " antiquity " become quite clear; as well as Dostoevsky's phrase, a phrase overwhelming, worthy of the *whole* Goethe, the pagan: " God has taken *seeds from other worlds* and planted them in the earth. And all that could grow, grew. But *everything on earth lives through the mysterious contact with the other worlds*." Herein is the whole of paganism. As, for instance, the whole of Egypt, whose temples were just groves, pillars—trees, invariably trees with " flower shaped capitals." And even a garden of ours is a mysterious temple, and not only does " sitting in the garden give health," but " sitting there turns one to prayer." Then we can understand the " sacred groves of antiquity," " the stillness of the

night in the woods," and Nature as sacred, not only "sacred theology alone." But let us return once more to the passions and to fire.

Through the passions and "orgies" we get an insight, mysterious yet real, into "the life of the future age." Just look how suspiciously and *reprehensibly* butterflies caress flowers! Yes, you can't help blaming them. But . . . there's "the life of the future age"; and well, what's to be done? It becomes clear then wherefrom and wherefore sprang the "orgies of antiquity," and that "without orgies there were no ancient religions." Remember the "nectar and ambrosia" of Olympus; and how in my *Oriental Motifs* I explained the Egyptian mysteries by means of drawings, *not daring to do it with words*. . . . Examining now collections of coins—coins of various countries with identical images—I already look at them with a feeling of kinship and with mute understanding. Without articulation and without words, just as I did in *Oriental Motifs*, the ancients conveyed through them their beloved mysteries, *all* of which they knew and knew *completely*; but no one has dropped a single word about "the life of the future age," of which life *in this earthly life silence must for ever be preserved.*

But . . . it is *thence* that "our passions" arise!!?? These are, indeed, "protuberances of the sun" (torches, eruptions from the body of the sun). And the sun itself, is not it subject to "passions"? Verily, "there are spots even on the sun." Christ alone is spotless. But our lovely sun is a bit of a "sinner": it burns and warms, it burns and heats; it burns—and in springtime when it "grows bigger," when it not only warms, but begins to excite the blood, all animals start conceiving. The strength of the sun, the "sin" of the sun, passes into animals. Every-

thing grows stout, all bellies grow big. The earth itself wants seed. . . . There is Demeter, there is Gea, there again is the " stirring field heaving its breasts in prayer." Now, shall we say with Christianity that all this is " a lie "? And that theology can be found only in seminaries? But surely there is much more theology in a bull jumping on a cow. . . . And generally:

Spring is coming, spring is coming
And the green noise is rising, rising . . .

this is paganism which is true; this is Apis and Serapis.

Kapterev mused for a while and said: Observations show that in a caterpillar wrapped up in a cocoon and appearing as though dead, there actually begins after this a reconstruction of the tissues of the body. So that it does not only appear dead, but actually dies. . . . Only instead of the dead caterpillar there begins to emerge a something else, but just out of this definite caterpillar, as it were out of the caterpillar-personality, with as it were a Christian and family name. Since out of any caterpillar placed there will come *that butterfly there*. And if you were to pierce the caterpillar, say, with a pin, then no butterfly will come out of it, nothing will come out of it, and the grave will remain a grave, and the body will not " come to life again." At that moment, just then, it became clear to me why the fellahin (the descendants of the ancient Egyptians who have evidently preserved their whole faith) cried and fired their guns on the Europeans, when the latter carried away the mummies, removed from the pyramids and from the royal graves. They, those European nihilists, dead whilst alive and tainted, understanding neither life nor death, had violated the whole-

ness of their (fellahin's) ancestors, and thereby had deprived them of "resurrection." As Kapterev said, they as it were "broke the mummies in two," or "pierced the chrysalis with a pin," after which it *passes into the grave without being*. And, then, the idea that "the butterfly is the soul of the caterpillar," "the entelechy of the caterpillar" (according to Florensky) became still more confirmed in me; and above all it became clear and *proved* to me that the Egyptians in their thinking and in their discoveries of "life beyond the grave" had proceeded in the same way as I did; that is, through the "butterfly" and its "phases." That to them, too, it was a way of discoveries and revelations, and that it was altogether *true*. Then I clearly understood the sarcophagi-mummies. Who that has seen them on the ground floor of the Hermitage in Petersburg could help being struck first of all by their *size*? Why such a *large*, huge sarcophagus for a mummy of a dead person, which itself is not at all large? But surely this is the "cocoon" of the chrysalis-man; and the sarcophagus was invariably constructed on the model of a cocoon. Just as oblong and smooth as any cocoon which a caterpillar invariably builds, was the sarcophagus which the Egyptians made for the body "becoming a cocoon." And the body was put in winding-sheets, was wrapped, as the caterpillar of a silk-worm, just letting out silk threads and, as it were, making a "silk shirt" for itself.

And a rough brown shell over it. That is the sarcophagus—always of a uniform brown tone. I think that even in its material it is identical with the shell of a chrysalis. Altogether the burial ritual of the Egyptians sprang from imitating the phases of the caterpillar. And hence chiefly comes the scarabeus, the insect as a symbol of transition into

future life, into life after death. This is the most famous of Egyptian deities—one might say their greatest deity. Why an insect then? But there was there just the same way of reasoning, as in my case. The supreme, the highest that the Egyptians discovered, was " the insect-like future life." And they immortalized their discovery through the insect, the scarabeus. It is the noblest memory; *i.e.*, the recollection and grateful memory of their own history and of the significance for which their history chiefly stood. Hence a multitude of explanations; as, for instance, why at " feasts " and particularly at " domestic feasts " they loved to carry mummies about. This is not sorrow, nor fear, nor a menace. Not the " Christian menace of death " which can cut short any joy. On the contrary: it is joy of the promise of eternal life, and *the joy of this life, of its limpidity and of its glory*. " We are now enjoying ourselves, but not yet perfectly," " we are at a feast, but not yet at a perfect one." Only when everything is over shall we participate in perfect love, in a perfect feast, with perfect food and drink. And our wine will be inexhaustible, and our drinks sweeter than all which we have here, for it will be pure love, and although material and concrete, yet already formed as it were out of the very rays of the sun, out of the light and scent and essence of flowers supernal. For if there are flowers, indeed they must be *supernal*.

Heavenly roses! Heavenly roses!! And the Egyptians carried about a mummy.

APPENDIX

A MEETING WITH ROZANOV

By N. N. Roussov

I RECEIVED an invitation from him to come to see him. And on 24 September 1918, I took a train to Sergiev Posad. I had not to search very long for Polevaya Street: it was on the very outskirts of the quiet monastery town. And in priest Belyaev's two-storied house Rozanov and his family lived.

Rozanov himself opened the door, on which was nailed the worn-away brass plate " V. V. Rozanov," the one of the possessions he had brought with him from Petersburg. He met me with embraces and exclamations:

" What events! . . . What events! " . . .

I could hardly recognize him, not having seen him for nearly ten years. He had become very old, thin, and shabby. He looked like an old country beadle. . . .

In the evening Rozanov took me to the monastery church. . . . As we could not stay out the whole night service, we walked home, and on our way, in the autumn moonless night, we talked of Orthodoxy. Rozanov loved Orthodoxy just as he loved Russia, as something native, our own. We agreed that Orthodoxy was not Christianity; but the worse it was for Christianity. . . . " The Old Zossima in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*," said Rozanov, " is a false Christian; the genuine Christian there is the

silent, fasting, crazy Ferapont. Generally, Dostoevsky confused Christ with Orthodoxy; he did not differentiate them, and went no further than the arithmetic of Christianity." . . .

We supped on rye bread, which I had brought with me from Moscow, and on potatoes which Nadya, Rozanov's daughter, had cooked for us. After supper he took me to his working room, where I was to sleep that night.

" You lie down on the couch," he said, " and I'll have a look at my papers on the table."

And as I slept I heard him rummaging among his papers and books for a long time. . . .

I woke about six o'clock, and from the window I saw Rozanov, at some distance from the house, pumping water from the well. . . .

The following day we went together to Moscow. He stayed the night with me, and tremendously enjoyed his coffee in the morning; and asked me if I could get some milk curds for lunch.

At coffee, Rozanov being in a very happy mood, puffing a cigarette, I asked him:

"Do tell me, Vasili Vasilievich, who of Dostoevsky's characters is nearest and dearest to you? "

Without thinking for a second he replied, impulsively and gently:

" Shatov, of course." . . .

I pondered over the answer. Was it not Shatov who maintained that Christ was dearer to him than truth? . . .

Rozanov regarded Dostoevsky as an atheist. Dostoevsky had no faith, he only furiously sought after faith with the great anguish of a desperate atheist. " Dostoevsky's faith is rather a thirst for faith. It is full of analysis, and there is no greater menace to religion, as an established cult, than its

ardent defenders. Such was the faith of Lermontov, Gogol, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, in whose *Legend of the Great Inquisitor*, the most profound declaration which was ever made about man and life, terrifying unbelief and most profound ecstatic faith are inconceivably mingled."

No man, according to Rozanov, has so deeply probed the human soul as Dostoevsky, and no one has discovered there such a mass of unexpectedly new, strange, inconceivable things. No one knew man or delved into the future more deeply than he did. And in this is the great tragedy of Dostoevsky's life, that he was understood by no one, nor could he be understood, since the disintegration of spirit, which to him was a thing of the past, has yet to come to others, in the future. . . . There is a great deal which Dostoevsky expressed for the first time on earth, and a great deal that had already been expressed before him he presented with greater force than any one else has done. Such, for instance, is his discovery of the capacity of the human soul for containing opposites at one and the same time. "The great horror of the human soul consists in this, that while thinking of the Madonna it at the same time does not cease thinking of Sodom and of its sins; and the still greater horror is that even in the very midst of Sodom it does not forget the Madonna, it yearns for Sodom and the Madonna, and this at one and the same time, without any discord." This has never been said before, and it is true, not only in a general sense, but in the literal sense—indeed of Sodom and of the Madonna, of which the soul being perfectly aware, yet yearns for, and yearns for them simultaneously. It is a sort of polarity of the human soul—not division, which has been known since Shakespeare, but a longing for

opposites, a longing for the greatest holiness and purity, that is, the awareness of them and the capacity for them in oneself. And along with this and simultaneously a longing for what is terrifyingly base, the mere thought of which chills the blood, that is, also the awareness of it and the capacity for it in oneself. . . . Again, the presentation of atheism, although done in literature before, has never been made with such overwhelming force as by Dostoevsky. . . . And Rozanov referred me to a passage in *The Devils*—Kirillov's talk before he commits suicide—where it says: " There was a moment when amid the earth stood three crosses and three men crucified on them; one of them so much believed that he said to the other: *to-morrow thou shalt be in paradise with me.* But they both died, and found neither paradise nor hell."

" When Dostoevsky wrote these words," Rozanov went on, " you feel that through his soul, through a single human soul, there passed such a terrifying atheism as never has been experienced by man before; or, if experienced, has not been uttered in words." . . .

Rozanov did not think that Dostoevsky was a great artist. He said that the *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor* was the most powerful utterance that has ever been made about man and history. In this respect it has no equal, there is nothing as powerful in the literature of the whole world. But it is a mere episode, and the whole, in which that episode is contained, is inferior to many other writings in the literature of the world. The whole book is only a presentiment, only a flash of what our literature is capable of becoming in the future. Such, for instance, is the description of the future atheistic state of mankind (in *The Adolescent*), incomparable for the

gentle, poetic light diffused in it, and for the deep sadness with which the vision is permeated. "If those ideas were not mere ideas, but bodied forth in artistic creations with the same genius with which Schiller, Goethe, or Byron bodied forth their ideas, we should have had the highest achievement in literature." . . .

SOME OF ROZANOV'S LETTERS TO E. GOLLERBACH

Sergiev Posad,
Maundy Thursday. Night. May 9, 1918.

I HAVE just stood "with the candles." And experienced again the old elation. But as I have already written about "the candles" in my *Apocalypse*, I listened with particular attention and concentration. And here is my impression: *Yes, the choice must be made*—either the Old Testament or the New. And if so, it must be either the New alone or the Old alone. Here, in the twelve Gospels, everything is so interwoven, everything bound with such iron, so welded together (apart from the Gospels, there is also the great work of the Church where everything is arranged so wisely, so well selected: the lessons, the canticles, the music of the anthems) that certainly such a great curse is being pronounced on all "Caiaphases"—a damnation "unto the other world," "unto the abyss of hell," a curse on very Jerusalem, with all its Baals, with its stout pregnant bellies, with the "gorging of sacrifices offered to idols," and generally all "sacrificial flesh" (their *hosts*)—that certainly either Christianity, and then trebly cursed, a hundred times cursed are all Jerusalems! And, do you know, along with them cursed are also Athens, Rome, Pergamus, "all Hellenism." And we shall remain only with "our pure virgins," with our Verochkas (my daughter, the nun,[1] and—I observe

[1] Vera Rozanov committed suicide soon after the death of her father.

—my Tanya is taking the same course: she finds comfort only in the Church, and always hurries to the services to be there before they start), and . . . cursed also are Messieurs Voltaire and all the "Voltaireans." . . . What a fate (I speak of Europe): either the monastery, or, if denial—then it is such a devilish denial, with giggling, cynicism, filth, and . . . the Revolution. . . . Do you know, my friend, had not that terrible religious cynicism prevailed in Europe, I should perhaps have stood all my life long "with the candles," quietly and peacefully, and experienced none but "Christian (Orthodox) elations." But this giggling at God has long, long astonished me, the giggling of the priests themselves, the giggling of the clergy itself, the giggling and . . . [*words illegible*]. Florensky once said that they, the priests, are engaged in theology for this sole reason that there are "books on theology," that there is a "literature of theology," and for no other reason. Such atheism is rooted in their souls that nothing like it could ever have occurred to the atheist Dobrolyubov; they are all dirty, religious cynics, with little stories. Now then, my Vera and Tanya, absolute children, are holy. Whence then those blackguards? And I keep on thinking, thinking all the time, thinking since 1898, since the publication of Sharapov's *Russky Troud*; in fact, even before that, for didn't I begin with *The Historical Position of Christianity* (my speech on the occasion of the Ninth Centenary of the Conversion of Russia)? Indeed, my whole life has been devoted to the theme of Christianity. Well now: whence come "Voltaire and the Voltaireans"? And can you imagine any Jew giggling like that at Moses? Never, never! But let us proceed further, probe more deeply. You know that Alcibiades was condemned to exile for

having dared to scoff at the statues of the gods at night (they are said to have been phallic statues) in the society of his boon companions. The time of Alcibiades was the time of Athens' disaster, the time of the Hellenic decadence, the time of the Peloponnesian war = to our present world war. And it means that not only in Jerusalem, but even in Athens "Voltaire would not have been allowed to exist." Why then was Voltaire possible in Paris, together with Diderot, Helvetius, etc., and prior to these—Boccaccio and his "jokes"? You remember the intolerable filth of the Decameron, that salaciousness, that dirt, that nasty giggle, indeed so much worse than the giggle of old Fiodor Karamazov. Well now, whence does this come: either "pure holy virgins," or "there is no God nor do we want one"? And, I say, my whole life has been devoted to the theme: *whence* does this filthy giggling at God come in Europe? And I decided: Yes, it comes from this, that in Europe there prevails not Providence, but Christ, not Fate, but the martyr of Golgotha, with His "casting to the devil" of Jerusalem, Athens, the Tree of Life, and generally of all the sanctities-profanities, which are basically phallic. In Judaism these two elements are mixed: sanctity and profanity are one. In a story from life Efron tells that a Rabbi, or Zadik or Melamed, being in a temper, called out to his hosts: "Fetch me some water, I must wash my hands, because I am in a temper and am afraid I shall not be able to refrain from uttering the Name (*i.e.*, Jehovah)." As I read that story I said: "Oh, that's how it is! You may not pronounce the Name without washing your hands immediately afterwards." This is just identical with what took place in the famous . . . [*word illegible*] Council, at which the "canons" of

Judaism were fixed, *i.e.*, when the genuine, God-inspired books were separated from the dubious God-inspired books. And it was settled in this way: " what books are they, the touching of the parchment of which with one's hands pollutes them." . . . The Council took place just before the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus. You see, there is a connexion here, a likeness to Alcibiades' prank when he struck off the phalli from the phallic gods. The historians did not guess anything here, but Rozanov perceived that what in Athens was a *shadow* was in Jerusalem a *substance*, that, strictly speaking, behind the back of Jerusalem and in the security of Jerusalem there was preserved intact the whole ancient world, all those " Baals," " Astartes " . . . [*word illegible*], " Dionysi," and all the rest of them. That, essentially, it was not Dionysus that was of account, but " the burning bush " which Moses saw and which was and is burning, just like the sun, eternally burning and never consumed. And on the whole:

> Give whatever name you will
> To my poem half-wild. . . .

but at the bottom of all there is the phallus. After I had moved to Sergiev Posad, I took up Friedlaender's *Koptos*, and suddenly came across a reproduction of God the Son . . . [*words illegible*]. Astonishing: the statue holds *in its right hand the phallus*. Do you remember, I wrote you from Petersburg that the essence of religiousness springs from a *certain vice*. When I, with an astonishment which I can't describe, examined that strangely quaint statue . . . [*word illegible*] I became suddenly convinced that my divination was absolutely true: " God " was

approximately addicted to that "vice." Well, what could I do? Surely I could not invent things. What concern is it of mine that the ancients, from the time of Moses, and certainly also before Moses, made statues, like the one found by Friedlaender. "It is not my fault," I mean, it is not I, Rozanov, who did it. Christ certainly knew all this ("Omniscient"), and it was enough for Him to aphallicize Himself and religion in order to destroy religion altogether, its very essence, its source, the Tree of Life (=phallus). It was enough for Him to do what Alcibiades did in Athens in order that all Solomon's temples should go flying to the devil. Now, what are "the 12 candles, *i.e.*, the 12 gospels, to which we listen with a candle in our hands"? It is a story of unbearable suffering, of unutterable nobility of soul, of the majesty and beauty of the Word and of the word. Indeed, Christ raised the symbol of the Word in order to overcome the Phallus for ever, and *for this*, *for this alone*, hath He come. And He said all, and He did all. This is the noümenal side of Christianity. I don't even know if Christ existed (there is no mention of him in Josephus Flavius; astonishing!)—only there lies before us the miraculous Book of the Gospels. At moments it seems to me (or it used to seem) that there was no Christ, but that there is a story about Christ, a story which destroys the phallus. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give ye rest." At such words—"pardon me, you can't think of eroticism"; "pardon me, there's no smack of Venus here." Generally, from the *text* of the Gospels there naturally emerges the monastery. The monastery, avitalism. "There is no life, nor is it needed." Sorrow and sorrow overflows everything. But then what shall we do? We must live,

we are meant to live. Surely we are destined to live and must live. . . . Well, life goes on, but it is the blackguards who live: Boccaccio, Voltaire, Hertzen. . . . They live . . . [*words left out*[1]] mean, vile. No more Alcibiades, but Gogol's Chichikovs of the Dead Souls. There is no longer the butterfly, its golden wings are torn off. And facing it sit the sturdy sneaks and . . . I can't make out why, with your understanding, you fail to bring it all into one picture. To me the godlessnesses of life are explained only in that way. And now look: there is Dostoevsky with his Kamazovdom, there is K. Leontiev with his aestheticism—what an anti-Christianity all this is already! What a new Athens and Sinai it all is! Do you know and do you guess that it is indeed in Russia that the anti-Christ is destined to arise, *i.e.*, simply to restore the phallus again, which had been struck off by Alcibiades . . . [*word illegible*], and finally by Christ. Dostoevsky is a return to theism, Leontiev is a new impetus of faith—oh, not a bit like the " evangelical " Tolstoy with his Tchertkovs. And Rozanov naturally continues or crowns the work of Leontiev and Dostoevsky. Only what in them was merely hinted and vague, becomes with me a clear idea. I speak straight out what they dared not even suspect. I speak because after all I am more of a thinker than they. That is all.

But the problem (in the case of Dostoevsky and Leontiev) is and was about anti-Christianity, about the victory over the very essence of Christianity, over that terrible avitalism. Whereas from him, from the phallus everything flows (circumcision). I have got tired. Oh, will this letter reach you?

[1] For fear of the Bolshevik censorship all references to current events and persons are left out by the Russian publishers.

Let me know if you get it safely. " I have read the MS., but disapprove of its contents."

I am tired. Addio.

V. ROZANOV.

Sergiev Posad,
August 26, 1918.

. . . In the course of fourteen years the State Duma, the Russian Parliament, has squandered all that the Kiev Princes, the Moscow Tsars, the Petersburg Emperors, and all their courageous helpers had acquired and accumulated in the course of a thousand years.

Oh, it is here where the " Dead Souls " were to be looked for. And people kept on looking for them in all sorts of places. The Russian performance is over. " Time to put on our overcoats and to go home." They looked round. But no overcoats nor houses were there.

Russia is a desert. Lord, what a vast wasteland Russia has become. They have sold her, sold, sold. The State Duma has sold the nation, sold the faith, sold the land, sold Russia's whole labour.

They sold her as though Russia was the serf-woman of the Duma. The Duma generally sold anything which people wanted to buy from it. And the astonishing thing is this: the Duma does not in the least consider itself at fault, and no " penitent nobleman " is to be found among them. The Duma even now considers itself perfectly right and perfectly innocent.

" The greatest Parliament in the world! " How those Chichikovs went over to London and jabbered

away! "Our peacock, too, must show himself off." And then they boasted of their reception.

And now only the Slavophiles turn out to be right.

Katkov alone.

Leontiev alone.

The latter said: "Russia is no longer a youth. She is a respectable old lady. She is a thousand years old. And you can rarely find a kingdom which has lived as long as that." It is astonishing that during the Revolution these aspects of our consciousness were not even mentioned. As though these ideas never existed at all. There were only Socialists and non-Russians at work.

And what about the Russians?

They were finishing their sleep of "Oblomov" and sitting in "The Lower Depths" of Maxim Gorky. And over all the land the Chichikovs spread themselves. . . .

* * *

"Food, the prime necessity! First food!"—that was always the object of my speculation. Well, suppose the "sons of the prophets" abstained from food, how then would they manage to live? For man eats three times a day. And the "son of the prophet" cannot do anything for himself. He is helpless. He is troubled. For verily God hath called him to speak, and to speak. The "son of the prophet" is a sleep-walker. He walks over steeples. He rings the bells. Glides over housetops. Peeps through garret-windows. And teaches, teaches all the while. "The son of the prophet is not in his own power." This is his essence, and were there no one to give him a hand, to keep him safe, he would fall to the earth and be shattered.

He would die.

Well? What then? Without prophets the earth will become frozen. . . .

* * *

From the days of my youth, from my childhood, I have been such a sleep-walker. Save "inner voices" which I heard within myself, I heard nothing else, I saw nothing else. "How do I manage to go on?" This was always a matter of wonder to me. "God saved me," for verily I had no means of saving myself. And whirlwinds arose in me. People, help me! Surely it is for you that I live; surely *for myself* I want nothing. . . .

* * *

And I blazed up, but dared not speak. How should I say it? How should I put it? How should I utter it? . . . And then came a woman. I don't know her, but she is from my native Kostroma.

Oh, my childhood! Oh, my desolate childhood!

And she has sent me six pounds of the purest oatmeal—dry, wholesome: three spoonfuls to be taken in a glass of hot milk. And I trust that, when in two months' time this will have been used up, she will send me more. It is nourishing food. Good for one . . . [*words illegible*]. Thanks to thee, dear, lovely, not-to-be-forgotten woman. Kostroma I left fifty years ago and never once returned there.

Evidently our "fellow-men," if they are not of stone, must . . .

* * *

I "dared not speak," but the woman "dared act." From my native and dear Kostroma she has sent me six pounds of oatmeal, most palatable oatmeal to be prepared with hot milk. This will last me a month, two months. Thanks to the dear

woman. And now I am eating . . . [*words illegible*]. And shall be able to work. Two months will pass—and she will send me more. . . .

Sergiev Posad,
October 6, 1918.

And the gaze of the serpent, starkly mad.[1]

This line of yours has somehow hypnotized me, and (silently, to myself) I keep on repeating it at tea and dinner and during the night—I can't get rid of it. I am sure it must be a memento of the Hospital of All the Sorrows, and I am sure there is no such a line anywhere. Tell me its origin.

Of my letters you liked only two: the first letter—the world is a little girl and a *stone*. Do you know that it is "you" and "I"? The last letter (the long, drawn-out one) is disgusting. I ought to have sparkled like a ruby, like the brightest of stones; and I made it look like a little mound.

How wonderful Mme. Mourakhin's letter is! Before I received that letter she had only seen me once or twice. I shan't conceal it from you: she has written much better than you, although she is obviously not "congenial" to me, and almost at "the opposite pole." But she has divined everything (the old woman is fifty-five). I dared not, I did *not allow* myself such a definition. "It is too fine: how can I put on such a vestment!" And now the old, but active, energetic, old woman has arrayed me in the night in that vestment, arrayed me in purple, arrayed me in a star. I did *feel* within myself, and with a feeling no longer *ashamed* of itself, that it was just like that, that it was the noümenal worlds that

[1] From a poem by E. Gollerbach.

I was holding in my hands. I am quiet and modest, and besides so plain; but I feel in myself a certain dominion over the world. Apropos, do you know the mysterious words which Rasputin said to me? But let me first tell you about the saying of Theophanes the Just (he's indeed a just man), the Inspector of the Theological College in Petersburg. Several writers, and I among them, were once sitting in Father Antoninus' house. Theophanes came in; but left in a quarter of an hour. It seemed as if not he, but we had come in. When Antoninus on a later occasion asked him the reason why he had left so soon, he replied: "Because Rozanov came in, and he is the Devil."

Now about Rasputin. He was dancing with a married woman, with whom he "lived," and in the presence of her husband was talking of it: "See, his wife loves me, and her husband too loves me!" I came up to him and said: "Why did you leave so soon last time?" (That was in the house of Father Yaroslav, with whose wife Rasputin also lived, and Father Yaroslav approved of it. Altogether it was a sort of paradise, the Eden of a community of wives and children.) And he replied: "Because I got *frightened* of you." Upon my word, I felt bewildered.

But when I think that I began to perceive Egypt where the people worshipped Apis; when I think that Rasputin was among women just a sacred Apis, Adonis (Adonai, as it is reproduced in a certain Egyptian atlas, standing near a chariot which holds a scarabeus—and Adonai is the Jewish God, who is also Jehovah, who is also "the burning bush"), Dionysus; that generally "all this" had become understood by me and had become my own—then I think that when Rasputin penetrated *meos circulos*

APPENDIX

(" Noli tangere meos circulos," said Archimedes to the Roman soldier who burst into his room-laboratory-study) he naturally became troubled, having caught sight of a superior in the same Rasputin-Dionysus-Adonai theogony, cosmogony. I remember him coming in. I had been sitting there for some time. A glass of tea was handed him. Silently he drank the tea. Then placed the glass upside-down in the saucer, and left the room without saying a single word either to his hosts or to myself. Well, if this is so, if he did not lie to me at the Bohemian dance party—and he hardly knew anything (certainly he did not know) about Apis and antiquity—then how could he, who was seeing me for the first time in his life, define me, by a mere glance at me, at my face, define the whole of me in my noümenal depth, a depth of which I myself was unaware, particularly unaware at that time? I knew that I was reviving Egypt; everything about Egypt, in its atlases (owing to the labours of scientific expeditions), was clear to me. I burst into tears in the Petersburg Public Library, saying to myself: " Yes! Yes!! Yes!!! I too might have done like that, drawn like that, had a ' drawing ' come into my mind "; but the drawing itself did not occur to my mind, there was no boldness in my thought, no courage, no daring to utter, but the feeling was there within me. . . . Well, now, is not Rasputin's fear of me, is not it also Rasputin's *miracle*? The miracle of knowing, as it were through the earth, or rather of knowing my *future*, which at that time was only " the present." You must agree that this recalls, or rather that this testifies to the " Dignity of Apis " in its eternal truth. That is, that I and Rasputin, Rasputin and Apis is a something indeed, and not a myth. I must add also this. Four girls: two

students, one a teacher of music, and one " neither this nor that," yet more sympathetic than all girl students on earth; and even one more, a fifth, " almost one " in the Caucasus (who had never seen me before)—all wanted to give themselves to me, and gave themselves to me on the ground of my boundless respect for woman, on the ground indeed that I myself look at woman, respect and honour her as a She-Apis. One of them saw me only once; she had a Lesbian friendship with another girl, a most noble girl, and that other girl, with whom she was connected, left me with her friend " for caresses." Is not this a miracle, is not this a real miracle? The miracle of noümenal affinity. I swear to you, oh, I do swear, that of the four, even of the five, there was not one even slightly depraved, slightly loose, slightly free and easy. As one of them expressed herself about her brother: " Oh, Do-ma-sha! Oh no! oh no! oh no! " That is, that her brother would never think of her in that way. And all our delights came only to . . . [*words illegible*] sexual contacts. Neither love, nor declarations. And yet both love and tenderness.

In the foundation, at the very bottom, there is my boundless respect. Respect for what? For woman, for Thee, O God. But in Thy female essence. And, through this, also for the soul. At moments it seems to me that I have reached the noümenon of the world, that I " hold a star," but somehow cannot concentrate on it or even pay the proper attention to it through the literary " I've no time now."

I have got tired. Keep well.

V. Rozanov.

Something more about " fore-knowledge." About four years ago there was a party at Michael Souvorin's.

APPENDIX

In the passage between two rooms a fortune-teller was placed. She was there, among the other entertainments, to amuse the guests. All showed their hands to her, the fortune-teller. She told futures. As I passed I held out my hand to her, and what do you think she told me?

She began to look for the " line of life," and, gazing at it, muttered in surprise: " You will live long . . . very long. I can't see the end of your line of life. . . . You will live many, many years. And up to the very end of your life you will be loved " (*i.e.*, by women). I believe she did not say " women," but the word implied women. And considering that " I could not " any longer, yet women—one of 19, the other of 19, the third of 23, the fourth of 29, and the fifth of 39 or 40—gave themselves to me—evidently there is " a something " in me, and that something comes indeed from Apis. " Honour Apis," and thyself shalt be Apis. Something of this sort. I am not thinking of myself. But I honour Apis very, very much. . . .

I am sure that the whole universe is parcelled out of " the body of Apis," *i.e.*, the whole universe consists of modes and modes, of parts and parts . . . [*words illegible*], of one unutterable and indefinable Apis, " Apis-noümenon," and strictly, only of his *genitalia*, and still more strictly, of his eternally gushing semen, of storms of semen, of whirls of semen. Electricity, volcanoes, light, thunder, " the hammer "—all these come from the phallus and nothing but the phallus. Cosmogony, the symbols of the world—all is phallus. The fir, the spruce, the pine tree, especially the pine-cone, the " form of a tree," the cupola of heaven, is all phalloid. Everything is " he," " he " is everywhere. " And without him nothing can be." I've got tired.

ROZANOV

And now we are coming to what we started with :

And the gaze of the serpent, starkly mad. . . .

There is generally a great deal of fetishism in me. Do you know which passage in your letter I liked best? That in which you say that you would like to see my material setting, and especially " to see and touch my things and my books." I think you would also like " to have a look at my furniture," on " what " and " how " I sit. That is the principal thing, the Egyptian. And all the rest is rubbish. " Europe " and nonsense. All the rest is mere newspaper stuff.

V. ROZANOV.

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